Of Opaque Bodies and Transparent Eyeballs

Democracy as Rhizomatic Panopticism in Paine's *The Age of Reason* and Emerson's *Nature*

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Abstract

The present dissertation introduces an interpretation of Thomas Paine's THE AGE OF REASON (1794) and Ralph Waldo Emerson's NATURE (1836) as politico-theoretical tracts that develop normative constructions of democracy. At the core of the analysis lies a comparative and historicist reading of the parameters of these constructions. The thesis informing the analysis posits that both normative constructions of democracy can be made explicit with the aid of the concept of a rhizomatic panopticism. The dissertation develops this concept on the basis of French poststructuralist texts and with theoretical approaches from the sociological field of Surveillance Studies in mind, explaining its relevance for the understanding of democracy during the Early-Republic and Antebellum periods in the USA. Furthermore, the discursive mediation of the introduced concept through the religious vocabularies of Deism, Unitarianism, and Transcendentalism in both tracts receives attention. Finally, a close reading puts forward how the distinct parameters of a rhizomatic panopticism are developed, represented, and discussed in both texts.

Die vorliegende Dissertation stellt eine Interpretation von Thomas Paines THE AGE OF REASON (1794) und Ralph Waldo Emersons NATURE (1836) als politiktheoretische Traktate vor, die normative Demokratiekonstrukte entwickeln. Diese Demokratiekonstrukte werden anhand ihrer Parameter vergleichend und historisierend gelesen. Die Annahme ist hierbei, dass sich die normativen Demokratieentwürfe beider Autoren mithilfe der Denkfigur des rhizomatischen Panoptizismus explizieren lassen. Die Dissertation leitet diese Denkfigur anhand von Texten des französischen Poststrukturalismus und auf Grundlage des soziologischen Ansatzes der Surveillance Studies her und erläutert seine Relevanz für das Verständnis und die Verhandlung von Demokratie in den Epochen der frühen Republik und des Antebellum in den USA. Ebenso findet eine Analyse der diskursiven Vermittlung dieser Denkfigur durch das religiöse Vokabular von Deismus, Unitarismus und Transzendentalismus in beiden Traktaten statt. Ein ausführliches *close reading* legt schließlich dar, wie einzelne Parameter eines rhizomatischen Panoptizismus in den Texten entwickelt, repräsentiert und diskutiert werden.

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To Mom and Dad

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1. Introduction

The present thesis investigates two texts by two authors who have each significantly impacted the perception of language and literature during their lifetimes: Thomas Paine and Ralph Waldo Emerson. While the latter is credited with having written "the manifesto of Transcendentalism" (Marx 12) and thereby shaped one of the most notable streams in American antebellum literature, the former is sometimes extolled as "perhaps the most effective writer of persuasive literature in the history of the English language" (Ricketson and Wilson vii). The present investigation examines Emerson's most famous treatise, *Nature* (1836), and Paine's most infamous one, *The Age of Reason* (1794). These two texts, thus the argument here, warrant an analysis as imbued with a specific political meaning that exceeds their generally assumed suffusion with ideologically charged discourses and implicit alliances, commonly postulated to determine all texts to some extent. The analysis suggested here defines both texts as political, rather than religious or spiritual, manifestos of sorts – manifestos that contain propositions for the normative outline of a democratic sociopolitical structure. In both texts, I suggest, this democratic sociopolitical structure is marked by a high degree of connectivity between its participating elements, by the fundamental reciprocity of power relations between them, by a concomitant conscious negotiation of equality, multiplicity, and heterogeneity, as well as by a negotiation of transparence and direct access to power. Furthermore, both texts construct prescriptive features for both, the material conditions in which such a sociopolitical structure would thrive, and the normative citizen who is envisioned as the inhabitant of such an idealized democratic space.

While there are differences between the specific features of Paine's and Emerson's respective outlines, I suggest that they do utilize one discourse to express their prescriptive, normative democratic visions. This discourse employs vocabularies pertaining to the semantic field of visual perception, which both authors vest in chiefly religious, spiritual, and more generally metaphysical terms. On account of its reliance on the semantic field of visual perception and because of the specific structural characteristics it privileges, I propose to refer to this discourse as 'rhizomatic panopticism.' With this reading, I contribute to those interpretations of Paine's and Emerson's work that attribute to them political significance specific to their respective historical contexts and the corresponding negotiations of democracy in projects of nation building.

When it comes to the research available on Paine, a chief interest in the connection of his writings with the various phases of his biography has to be noted. In fact, his biography is chiefly conceptualized in terms of his texts and vice versa. Therefore, Paine's biographies do often comprise a detailed discussion of his pamphlets and tracts, while scholars purporting to analyze mainly Paine's texts will often do so in connection with a discussion of his biography. Reading W. E. Speck's *Political Biography of Thomas Paine*, one may conjecture that this approach derives from the necessity to compensate for the relative scarcity of documents or personal correspondences that could be used as "reliable documentary evidence" when composing an account of Paine's life (xii). In the face of this shortage of documents, Speck goes on to note, "a story of Paine's life has to be pieced together from a variety of sources, many being partial in both senses of the word" (ibid.). Edward D. Davison and William J. Scheick agree that "[w]hatever the detail and wealth of biographical information on Paine throughout his career, and especially in the dramatic times of his American and French experience, there is almost nothing about him as a living person" (26). Biographers' paramount focus on his writings and their analysis may thus have originated in the necessity to compensate for the insufficiency of other suitable sources on which to base a narrative about Paine.

In line with these observations regarding the intertwined nature of biographical background and textual production in scholarship on Paine, A. J. Ayers, for instance, sets out "to combine a sketch of his life and character with a critical examination of his political and religious standpoints" (xi). Gregory Claeys, in a similar vein, wants to amend what he evaluates as a "bifurcation in Paine studies" (3) characterized by previous scholarship's failure to foster a convergence of Paine's writings and expressed ideas produced in both the American and the European context (ibid.). He thus aims to be "integrating debates about Paine's American and European works" (ibid.). In so doing, Claeys consciously tries to not merely recreate Paine's biography, but to conceive of Paine as a political thinker. Using Paine's biography as their chief orientation, William F. Ricketson and Jerome D. Wilson propose to view Paine "as a writer" (vii) who needs to be evaluated as the main source of today's celebration of "the worth of the common individual" (ibid.) as well as the source of "significant contributions to Western institutions" (viii). In resonance with Ayer as well as with Ricketson and Wilson, Audrey Williamson states that his purpose is to "present a fair psychological picture and sift truth from legend" while uncovering Paine as "primarily a

writer, a humanitarian, and a political philosopher and reformer" (11). Williamson seems to implicitly anticipate Speck's consideration regarding the scarcity of documents other than Paine's tracts when he muses that Paine's "character emerges from his work, and the true task of a biographer, to my mind, is to study both. For it was through his work that Paine made an imprint on his time, and remains of living interest in our own" (ibid.).

These biographers and Paine scholars provide valuable contextualizations of Paine's works in the historical and philosophical environments in which they came into existence. The treatment of *The Age of Reason* is therefore mostly comprised of a synopsis of Paine's main arguments and criticisms in that tract, together with background information on similar tenets expressed by earlier and contemporary Deists; it does not, however, feature an interpretation or close reading of distinct passages of that tract that link it to other than the professed issues of religion and the problematic interrelations between church and state at the time of Paine's writing. Steven Blakemore, while not exclusively centering on Paine, and devoting much more attention to close readings and interpretations, still uses a method mindful of Paine's biographical insertion into his own texts in his analysis of Paine's particular textual construction of the French Revolution. Surveying *The Age of Reason* as well as Paine's textual interactions with Edmund Burke and George Washington, Blakemore argues that "Paine's vision of the French Revolution is ultimately a vision of himself as the revolutionary creator of America – a creator who exposes counterrevolutionary traitors and erases competitive 'founders,' emerging as both the first and the last originator of the modern revolutionary era" (Blakemore 25, 26).

Notable deviations from this pattern of dealing with *The Age of Reason* in monographs exclusively dedicated to the examination of Paine's writings have emerged more recently. Among those who analyze specifically Paine's role as a writer, one who consciously employs rhetoric and poetic strategies to propagate his ideas, Edward Larkin must be pointed out for his investigation of this very facet of Paine's work on the basis of his best-known pamphlets and tracts. Larkin avers that "Paine's success was largely predicated on his ability to present sophisticated political ideas to a general readership" (2). Paine, according to Larkin, finds innovative ways of expression by virtue of whose utilization he "both manipulates and politically enfranchises a new popular audience by presenting what are actually complex and rhetorically sophisticated arguments as simple facts" (ibid.). In the context of this argument, Larkin ties *The Age of Reason*'s specific discourse to a similar

process of popularization in the natural sciences as well as to the gradually proceeding valorization of the professions of urban mechanics and artisans during the late 18th century (cf. 114-148).

Similarly concerned with Paine's rhetorical strategies to further his political goals in *The Age of Reason*, Davidson and Scheick investigate the methods Paine uses "to present himself as an authority on religion, especially on the Bible" in order to dismantle the claim to power of the very same (27). Davidson and Scheick thus analyze the "subtle features of this assumption of authoritative voice" endeavored by Paine in an attempt at "exposing the pseudoauthority of established religion as a mainstay of the social and political malaise of his time" (ibid.). They further postulate that for Paine's "expressions of religious idea and conviction are of the same form and mode as are his political convictions. In Paine's opinion, the rhetoric of one is virtually interchangeable with that of the other, and […] indeed Paine understood the aim of the former to be virtually identical with that of the latter" (Davidson and Scheick 27).

In my survey of the academic interest in Paine and his work, I coincide with Robert Lamb's conclusion that "[d]espite having been the subject of much valuable scholarly attention throughout the twentieth century, there has been little interest expressed in Paine that has not been of a purely historical or biographical nature" (483). Resonating with Speck and Williamson, Lamb attributes this fact to Paine's disorderly life-course and its enigmatic and to this day obscure passages. I particularly agree with Lamb regarding the "marked neglect" (484) with which "the distinct theoretical content" (ibid.) of Paine's thought is treated. Lamb goes on to redress this imbalance by focusing on Paine's "strikingly unique contribution" (484) to a conceptualization of property rights as devised in the essay published in 1797 entitled *Agrarian Justice*. Lamb formulates the thesis that "Paine's egalitarian case for redistribution is intimately bound up with his libertarian defense of private ownership" (485). He goes on to say that "[e]quality acts as a normative standard for Paine, an axiom from which he derives a catalogue of individual rights and correlative duties" (487). It is Paine's insistence on and theorization of what John W. Seaman calls "a rather unusual natural right, a right to welfare" (120) that very commonly features in discussions deliberating the proposition of a negative income tax or unconditional income until today and for which Paine is recognized as an influential theorist.

Apart from its explication in *Agrarian Justice*, Paine's political thought is most commonly recognized to find expression in *Rights of Man*. Attempts at constructing a coherent outline of a sociopolitical system or features of a polity therefore most commonly concentrate on these texts, treating *The Age of Reason* only in a cursory manner. When a political rationale is recognized to inform Paine's apparently anti-religious tract, the conclusion regarding the political opinions expressed therein still seem fundamentally impacted by a cross-reading with *Rights of Man*. Steven Goldsmith, for example, does indeed identify "an ulterior and specifically political motive" to be perceptible in *The Age of Reason* (184). However, his assertion that Paine evaluates representative political structures as crucial to democracies, in spite of being aware of the need to engage them critically (188) intimates a reading of *The Age of Reason* as an extension of *Rights of Man* as well as of the statements Paine is recorded to have made during his service as a representative in the National Convention. Likewise, Georgina Green centers her analysis of Paine's stance on representation on, mainly, *Rights of Man*, using *The Age of Reason* only to substantiate her interpretation of Paine's more overtly political texts, but not as carrying a political message in its own right (82).

This approach exemplified by Goldsmith, Green, and others, is indubitably extremely valuable when it comes to identifying common threads and parallels between the texts that may elucidate Paine's political convictions as a philosopher or activist of sorts. To put differently, I view the said convergence of several of Paine's texts into one continuum as part of a rather author-oriented methodology that is at least partly interested in reconstructing, or constructing, a coherent 'Painite' theory of politics or government that is believable not only against the backdrop of the entirety of Paine's writings, but also in the face of his biography, particularly the American and French passages thereof. In contrast to this endeavor, I propose to read Paine's various texts as rather more discreet phenomena, which undisputedly share characteristics in terms of structure, content, and message, but which also exhibit a sufficient degree of nuance as to warrant a more exclusively focused analysis. *The Age of Reason* is a particularly interesting case in point, as its analysis from a chiefly political vantage point allows for a construction of the implied author as more intensely committed to direct and radical expression of self-rule than a cross-reading with other texts has so far permitted regarding Paine. This considerable nuance exhibited in individual texts when compared might explain the existence of "rival Thomas Paine societies in the USA

today" (Speck xi) and illuminate why both the political left and the right claim Paine as one of their own (ibid). As Speck also notes referring to the reactions of Paine's contemporaries, "[m]any who applauded the political stance Paine adopted in *Rights of Man* deplored the anti-Christian sentiments of *The Age of Reason*" (xii).

Not unlike Paine, Emerson, too, finds consideration in a manner that often conflates his recorded overtly political stances and utterances, or the perceived and condemned lack thereof, with those political positions that can be inferred from his philosophical tracts. However, research focusing specifically on the political import of *Nature* is considerably more abundant than is the case with Paine's *The Age of Reason*. In his authoritative account of Jacksonian Democracy, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. comments on the political orientations and activisms of some of the leading intellectuals of that time, focusing on the emerging circle of the Transcendentalists in New England. Evaluating positively Emerson's skepticism of such utopian experiments as undertaken by George Ripley in the commune of Brook Farm, Schlesinger still comes to the conclusion that

> politics represent his greatest failure. He would not succumb to verbal panaceas, neither would he make the ultimate moral effort of Thoreau and cast off all obligation to society. Instead he lingered indecisively, accepting without enthusiasm certain relations to government but never confronting directly the implications of acceptance. (Schlesinger 384)

Contrasting the public image of Emerson with that of Thoreau, the historian sketches the picture of an intellectual whose doubt and "indecision" concerning the motivations and the effectiveness of political activisms served as a justification for inaction. The charge of an unvoiced affirmation of, and thereby complicity with, hegemonic structures of power, expressed by Schlesinger employing the allusive reference to "the implications of acceptance," has shed its indirect character, and assumed the shape of detailed and cogent analyses when it comes to the discussion of Emerson's first published tract *Nature* by literary and cultural critics today. These criticisms most eminently inquire into *Nature's* connivance in promulgating hegemonic discourses and practices of socioeconomics and expansion.

According to Christopher Newfield, for example, Emerson's *Nature* is indicative of a construction of a "corporate notion of individualism in which individuality consists of

obeying a massive (yet benevolent) administrative power which is private and out of one's control" (63). In spite of recognizing an intended space for potential "group sovereignty" in this construction (ibid.), Newfield sees Emerson as the proponent of a "corporate liberalism" that is tied to Emerson's often-noted "liberal individualism" (8). Neal Dolan, who criticizes Newfield because he unjustly and "aggressively takes [Emerson] to task for failing to share a certain kind of postmodernist political radicalism" (*Emerson's Liberalism* 10), coincides with him in his concern for Emerson's liberal political and economic sympathies. Reading *Nature* as deeply rooted in the tradition of European Enlightenment, Dolan states that "the moral logic of laissez-faire liberal capitalism appealed to Emerson" (ibid. 102), so that a "moral defense of capitalism" that is "clearly consistent with the ruggedly individualistic outlook of conservative thought running from Alexander Hamilton through John Quincy Adams to Abraham Lincoln, Calvin Coolidge, and Ronald Reagan" is patent in Nature (ibid. 104).

Myra Jehlen's reading of the concept of incarnation as the core of the relationship between land and its description in Nature presents Emerson's text as an example of expansionist intentions and discourses dominant in the American culture of the Antebellum. Analyzing the "linguistic representation of the assertion that America is primordially and organically defined, and thus – from analysts, historians, or celebrants – awaits only articulation" (121), she concludes that the idea of an imminent revelation or "articulation" of this already defined space equals a propagation of discourses and policies informed by the expansionist narrative of Manifest Destiny. Thoroughly engaged with and qualified since its formulation in 1986, especially by Johannes Voelz (180-184) and Jerome Tharaud (65), Jehlen's argument remains widely referenced when considering *Nature's* political implications in the age of aggressive expansion.

To once again return to the parallel with research conducted on Paine's life and texts, none of the presented readings distinguish between Emerson as the author of *Nature* and the first-person narrator constructed to operate within his dissertation – a feature shared with appraisals that focus on the junctures of Emerson's life and his writing, thereby often underscoring a presumed apolitical character of Emerson's writing in line with Schlesinger's evaluation of the author's political views as cautious and "indecisive." Therefore, the analysis of Emerson's philosophic treatise is often guided by the premise of the text's direct biographical, rather than historical, expressiveness. Before turning to his actual interest in the interdependence of *Nature* and Emerson's early compositions on natural history,

Michael P. Branch, to give one example, introduces "a number of intersecting contexts" of the author's biography as patent in *Nature*, among which he identifies Emerson's "vocational transition" from the ministry to "the new role as public intellectual," the "loss and grief" caused by the deaths of first wife Ellen and brother Charles, as well as Emerson's visit to Europe and the stimulating influence of the developing circle of Transcendentalists in New England (220), an approach and analysis reiterated by Tharaud in his investigation of the representation of geography in *Nature* (87). This biographical focus of inquiry into the work of Emerson highlights the mentioned presumed congruence of the author and the narrative voice of his texts and therefore, as is true for Paine, also presupposes a continuum of a set of coherent political opinions to inform Emerson's writing generally. Certainly, this practice is appropriate for the analysis of Emerson's philosophical and political essays and lectures, whose presentation and dissemination enacted this congruence and whose popularity and impact was largely dependent upon this "public intellectual's" professed attitudes and reputation, his "notoriety as a trouble-maker within the ministerial elite," and his "basic message of the claims of Self-Reliance pitted against conventionalism" (Buell, "Inventing the Public Intellectual" 40).

However, this practice of the conflation of author, implied author, and narrative I as well as the constant regard for Emerson's views in their entirety as he communicated them in his function of the "public intellectual" is also predisposed to limit the interpretative frame awarded to his work. This approach proposes too great a stress on Emerson in his said role as "the first public intellectual in the history of the United States" (Buell, *Emerson* 1). In other words it can be said that the practice of the said conflation, in spite of historicizing Emerson's work, seeks to answer the question of how Emerson constructed himself, taking into account his diverse and sometimes conflicting interests, convictions, and affiliations, through his texts. And much like Paine's readers, Emerson's too seem to be invested in the project of constructing and reconstructing a distinctly 'Emersonian' set of politics as is establishes itself after the consideration of the entirety of Emerson's utterances in presumed unison. My interest however, is located in the question of how a particular text constructs and negotiates specific social, political, and cultural themes marking the historical context of its production. In the present thesis, therefore, I diverge from the presented modes of inquiring into *Nature* that are constituted by the premise of implicit collusion with hegemonic discourses on the one hand and the supposition of the unity of author, implied

author, and narrator on the other. Since the presence of the perpetuation of hegemonic and oppressive dominant discourses has been extensively and convincingly marked, an investigation of the representations of alternatives to contemporary political conditions, beyond the Utopianism referenced by Schlesinger, shall contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the political potentials of *Nature* – an understanding to which a contrasting reading with Paine's *The Age of Reason* shall productively contribute.

Far more common than comparative considerations of Paine and Emerson, or any Transcendentalist American writer for that matter, are comparative analyses of Paine and other English expatriates in either the US or France during both revolutions. The abovementioned analyses presented by Blakemore, Goldsmith, and Green, but also by Jane Hodson, usually compare or parallel Paine's written accounts and evaluations of the French Revolution to those of, among others, Mary Wollstonecraft. David A. Wilson, for example, compares Paine and William Cobbett as the "Founding Fathers of Popular Radicalism in England" (8) and seeks to understand their status as such by investigating "the forces which helped shape their responses to the American Empire of Liberty" (ibid.). Among the analyses that compare Paine and Emerson and trace continuities connecting the two, Joe Webb's 2006 essay with the title "Echoes of Paine: Tracing The Age of Reason through the Writings of Emerson" stands out in its relevance to the present thesis, as it overlaps with my inquiry in its choice of primary text. Interestingly, Davidson and Scheick also note a "proto-Emersonian voice" in Paine's writings, which they attribute largely the influence of Quakerism, which was the religion of Paine's father and influenced Paine in favor of egalitarianism and against the acceptance of oppressive religious traditions (28). Especially Paine's occasional descriptions of the natural sphere can resonate with later streams in American literature, first and foremost Romanticism and Transcendentalism. As Woll points out regarding one such instance of Paine's depiction of nature, what prevails is

> an exuberant tone, which reminds us of the romantic authors and poets of a later period, when the New England nature had lost much of its hostility towards man. Paine, who had never been exposed to the dangers of frontier life, considered nature and thus its creator, as beneficent. (164)

This view of nature as imbued with meaning beyond its immediate material self is what seems to unite Paine and Emerson at the very first glance at their respective writing. Both *The Age of Reason* and *Nature* convey a natural sphere that is representative of spiritual wisdom and facts beyond the grasp of a perception of the material. I propose to extend this analysis of parallels and similarities between Paine and Emerson from the ambit of stylistics and the consideration of religious tenets to that of politics. More precisely, the present examination's chief interest is the analysis of the employment of semantic fields that pertain to different aspects and forms of religion, Deism in Paine's and Unitarianism and Transcendentalism in Emerson's case, to express political ideas pertaining to normative constructions of democracy.

Specifically, I propose to examine the potentially oppositional political implications of the logic of the gaze constructed in both Paine's and Emerson's treatises. Especially in Emerson's case this proposed focus on the potentials of the gaze might appear as a most convenient point of departure in view of the fact that the *Nature*'s most conspicuous as well most avidly analyzed metaphor concerns the "transparent eye-ball" (Emerson 10). When it comes to scrutinizing the political aspects of a certain regime of gazes, Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* likewise provides a productive point of departure. While the representation of prisons in their panoptic arrangement has been focused upon as indicative of the interconnectedness of the "imagery of freedom" with that of "captivity" in Emerson's essays (C. Smith 225), the panoptic potential of the "transparent eye-ball" has not been inquired into. However, surveying the effects that an interpretation of both *The Age of Reason's* and *Nature's* constructions of the gaze and its specific logic implies, I propose that an addition to the theoretical framework provided by Michel Foucault is needed. I find this addition in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concept of the rhizome, as outlined in *A Thousand Plateaus*. The fact that Deleuze and Guattari briefly make reference to Transcendentalist literature when mentioning Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* as the example of a rhizomatic book (*A Thousand Plateaus* 20) seems to suggest a general suitability of poststructuralist theory for the investigation of Transcendentalism. Yet while Whitman's work indeed received in-depth consideration under the premise of its incorporation and construction of rhizomatic structures (Folsom 1571-1579), Paine's and Emerson's work did not, in spite of the aptness for such enquiry.

In fine, I base my analysis on the thesis that Paine's *The Age of Reason* and Emerson's *Nature* construct the natural sphere as a space that follows the principles of rhizomatic panopticism in order to propose an alternative outline of a political and socioeconomic system whose main characteristics negotiate and also deviate from those conditions that informed both authors' contexts of writing.

Drawing from the conceptual framework of the academic field of Surveillance Studies, I engage the concept of "rhizomatic surveillance," first introduced by the sociologists Richard V. Ericson and Kevin D. Haggerty, in order to then deduce from it the more general notion of "rhizomatic panopticism." Reading the sociologists against Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* and Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, I infer the outline of a rhizomatically panoptic space in which every of the heterogeneous elements contained within its multiplicity is potentially connected to any other one by means of the gaze, which on its part can be radiated into every direction as well reciprocated, inducing various processes of becoming in the elements thus connected. The concept of the "Body without Organs" as outlined by Deleuze and Guattari is introduced as constituting the element, or "plateau," whose connection to others is established through the reciprocating gaze. I go on to suggest that rhizomatic panopticism's premises of a reciprocating, omnidirectional gaze as well as the induction of total visibility into a particular space are largely congruent with normative democratic maxims of reciprocity, transparency, and accountability. Both Paine and Emerson, I argue, achieve the discursive construction of such a system of rhizomatic panopticism by engaging vocabularies pertaining to the semantic fields of the spiritual and the metaphysical.

I suggest an understanding of the presented union of the rhizomatic with the panoptic as at the core of the conception of a sociopolitical space that highlights transparency and accountability of every party involved in its system. I further propose that the outlined characteristics of reciprocity and visibility that shape the space that follows the logic of rhizomatic panopticism correspond with the organizing principles of salient conceptions of democratic society. In modern-day theorizations of democracy, such as, for example, presented in *Democracy and Disagreement*, put forward by Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, the maxims of "reciprocity, publicity, and accountability" (12) play a central role – a fact that speaks for a certain continuity in the understanding of democratic tenets since Greek antiquity, in which "relations of perfect reciprocity" among the citizens

were deemed to mark a democratic space (Gasché 12). These three tenets of democracy are enforced by the notion of transparency, which according to J. Lawrence Broz can be defined as "the ease with which the public can monitor the government with respect to its commitments" (861). Since one of the explained key functions of the panoptic gaze is precisely the faculty to "monitor," a space that is defined by the operation of this gaze is likewise defined by transparency. On account of the fact that this panoptic, all-seeing gaze is marked by reciprocity and omnidirectional vectors, but also by its representation of power, a "government" implicated into the outlined sociopolitical system is not exempt of this gaze's impact. The possibility of publicity rests on the visibility that this transparency fosters.

Transparency, in the same manner, has the potential of setting forth mechanisms of public debate and activism that can ensure accountability. Jonathan Fox makes plain that while empirically oriented political scientists regard the thesis that "transparency generates accountability" an imprecise "conventional wisdom," they still conceive of the said construction of cause and effect a "normative" feature that informs "democratic values" (664). Having thus qualified the universal applicability of a construction of conditional relations between transparency and accountability, Fox goes on to define the latter concept as "the capacity or the right to demand answers" as well as "the capacity to sanction" (665). Since transparency, in the sphere here constructed, is an effect of the gaze and thus always indicates its presence, it also indicates the presence of communicated imperatives, or "demands," and the ensuing processes of becoming that accompany a rhizomatic connection of the system's elements. These processes of becoming, if seen as the results of the communication through the gaze, are equivalent with the "sanctions" proposed by Fox. The "capacity" to effectuate them can thereby be claimed by every individual component of the rhizomatically panoptic space. Regarding the conceptual and causal analogies of accountability and the processes of becoming as well as of transparency, publicity, and reciprocity with the character and qualities of the rhizomatically panoptic gaze, I propose an understanding of the presented model of rhizomatic panopticism as a version of a normative construction of sociopolitical associations largely congruent with normative outlines of democracy.

Generally speaking, research on the panopticon and the actualization of panoptic principles in society tends to focus on the impact that technologies and material conditions exert. Ericson and Haggerty are, as described, a case in point and provide some of the core

framework on which this thesis is developed. They are also representative of an approach to surveillance that Jerome E. Dobson and Peter F. Fisher call “literal” and “empirical” rather than “metaphorical” and to which they also count themselves (309). In their 2007 essay entitled “The Panopticon’s Changing Geography,” Dobson and Fisher examine the evolution and impact of three different types of panoptic structures, to which they refer as “Panopticon I, II, and II” (308). These are represented respectively by the well-known Benthamite “surveillance machine” that is also the basis for Michel Foucault’s theorization (ibid.), by television technologies, especially those used for surveillance purposes (308, 309), and finally by the phenomena of “location based services” such as “human tracking” (309), to which they dedicate the bulk of their comparative analysis of cost and efficiency. Evidencing the latter technology’s low costs, wide-spread acceptance, and its efficiency that “lurches toward perfection” regarding its panoptic power (318), Dobson and Fisher state that “[a] grand social experiment no one knows how far it will go” (321).

Dobson and Fisher’s sense of urgency in the face of the rapid advancement and seemingly insufficient public debate of surveilling technologies is echoed by other scholars and, very justifiably, informs the focus on the material aspects of panopticism in its every-day uses. As Neil M. Richards notes in his 2013 essay called “The Dangers of Surveillance” regarding the general feeling of discomfort when confronted with topics of surveillance and the equally wide-spread “warnings” against it in popular culture:

> These warnings are commonplace, but they are rarely very specific. Other than the vague threat of an Orwellian dystopia, as a society we don't really know why surveillance is bad and why we should be wary of it. To the extent that the answer has something to do with "privacy," we lack an understanding of what "privacy" means in this context and why it matters. We've been able to live with this state of affairs largely because the threat of constant surveillance has been relegated to the realms of science fiction and failed totalitarian states. (1934)

However, as Richards goes on to bring to attention, “these warnings are no longer science fiction. The digital technologies that have revolutionized our daily lives have also created minutely detailed records of those lives” (ibid.). Again, the diffuse sense of a menace emanating from surveilling power, especially the kind exercised by institutions and

governments, becomes increasingly focused and nuanced as the technological advances facilitate its ever more efficient materialization. Against the backdrop of these rapid innovations, the imperative to ever more specific conclusions on the basis of ever larger sets of empirical findings is symptomatic and leads to criticism of operating with “far too much speculation and theorizing and far too little data” (Manning 242) when evaluating contributions to Surveillance Studies.

Theorizations of surveillance also feature a growing awareness of an increasingly diversifying field of those who are becoming enabled to exercise panoptic power. Not unlike Ericson and Haggerty, Dobson and Fischer anticipate an atomization when it comes to the exercise of panoptic powers and the concomitant storing of data obtained through surveillance, yet not in a manner that would potentially empower those under surveillance: Speaking of the increasing power of surveillance and data storage exercised by corporations, they predict the replacement of “just one ‘Big Brother’” by “many overbearing ‘Little Brothers,’” thus forecasting a shift of concern away from government actors (311). Richards, too, notices an augmentation of “the entities that wish to surveil” (1936) and identifies them largely with institutions. In his 2011 essay “Surveillance as a Cultural Practice,” Torin Monahan resonates with Ericson and Haggerty’s rather more optimistic view and lists instances in which surveillance and monitoring technology was seized by citizens in order to improve and protect their living environments or to unmask environmental damage (cf. 498, 499). Hence, the twofold potential of surveillance technologies must be noted as it “can be mobilized to repress populations or bring about conditions of collective empowerment; it can be used by people occupying positions of high institutional status or by those excluded from traditional arenas of power and influence” (Monahan 498).

In the face of this twofold potential of surveillance, efforts to point out those facets of panoptic practices that can bring forth democratization and empowerment become increasingly differentiated. Monahan avers that “surveillance can serve democratic or empowering ends if it brings about openness, transparency, accountability, participation, and power equalization among social groups and institutions” (Monahan 498). Anders Albrechtslund and Thomas Ryberg focus their attention on the “intelligent building” and propose an alternative to the trend of conceiving of the dwellers of such houses as “passive subjects in a power relation” (36). According to Albrechtslund and Ryberg, this conception is

deficient, as it ignores the “active role” that dwellers can exercise “taking part in their own surveillance” (ibid.) and also

> reflects a vertical, hierarchical power relation between the watcher and the watched, which is represented in familiar metaphors such as Big Brother and Panopticon. This understanding of surveillance puts the power into the hands of the watcher while the watched is more or less a passive subject of control. (ibid.)

In contrast to this dominant view, the sociologists introduce the notion of “participatory surveillance” in which “the practice of surveillance is seen as mutual and horizontal, which offers the inhabitants an active, potentially empowering role” (ibid.). Albrechtslund and Ryberg then use these principles of “participatory surveillance” to evaluate concrete technologies used in such buildings. Again, core concepts connoted with democratic principles come into play: “For instance,” Albrechtslund and Ryberg continue, “the increased transparency of power consumption within the household (or between households) can become a means for the families to change their practices as they see fit, rather than a vertical power struggle between families and electricity providers” (44).

The major academic focus on surveillance carried out by institutional and government actors has also been addressed by sociologists in this context. Monahan briefly reviews the relevant research on panopticism and notices a “general emphasis on institutional or organizational power” which he evaluates as “amazingly productive,” but also representative of “a trajectory from which it has been difficult to deviate” (495, 496). A similar “tendency within current social science surveillance research to focus primarily upon technologies and practices” (548) is also noticed by David Barnard-Wills, which he addresses by forwarding an analysis of the representation of surveillance in UK mass media, noting that such “discourses often shape norms, alter reception of or resistance to surveillance, and construct the very problems to which surveillance solutions are sought” (ibid.). In the process of his analysis, Barnard-Wills completes Ericson and Haggerty’s concept of the surveillant assemblages with an “enunciative component,” likewise basing himself on Deleuze and Guattari (549), thus refocusing attention on the “discursive dimension of assemblages” (ibid.) as “technology cannot be thought of in isolation from its social context” (550).

Yet Monahan also acknowledges a broadening of the theoretical approaches to surveillance and thus proposes an approach to surveillance as a phenomenon more intricately entwined with every-day experience, "not as a set of tools to be used for instrumental ends but as forms of life in their own right" (Monahan 499). As he suggests a greater orientation toward more immediate experiences of surveillant or panoptic practices that do not necessarily calibrate themselves between the individual and an institution or government, the focus of the researchers that he introduces in the course of his essay still remains on surveillance as mediated by technology. Thus, "consumer-based surveillance" during shopping (ibid. 499), "face-recognition" in the ambit of social media (500), and "meaning-making practices about surveillance" as they are propagated by mass media (ibid.) are the topics explored to address "people's experiences of and engagement with surveillance on their own terms, stressing the production of emic over etic forms of knowledge" (496). I propose that another tactic of bringing "surveillance as a cultural practice" to the forefront could be employed in decoupling surveillance from technology and conceptualizing it in terms of a bodily faculty and function.

Against the background of these theorizations in the field of surveillance studies it is necessary to point out that what I call rhizomatic panopticism is not meant to function as a descriptive device for the capture of a specific set of surveillance practices. Rhizomatic panopticism as a term thus does not function on the same level and to the same purpose as do terms such as the "oligopticon," "participatory surveillance," or even "rhizomatic surveillance." Much rather, I propose to define the term as a descriptor of a particular discourse that constructs various spaces according to the structural parameters implied by both the rhizome and the panopticon. I postulate that these structural parameters coincide with those employed to conceptualize different forms of democracy. I further specify the argument in the context of Paine and Emerson by stating that this discourse can aptly vest itself in Deist as well as in Unitarian and Transcendentalist terms.

To elucidate how Deist and Unitarian vocabularies lend themselves to give expression to theorizations of democracy encompassed by the term of rhizomatic panopticism, I first explain the deduction of the term from Deleuze, Guattari, and Foucault as well as its relation to Ericson and Haggerty's "rhizomatic surveillance." In that chapter, I also define the structural characteristics presupposed by the introduced term. Subsequently, I turn to the different conceptions and definitions of democratic political systems, aiming to focus

primarily on those features that are relevant to a discourse of rhizomatic panopticism. I further provide a brief historical overview of the periods in which *The Age of Reason* and *Nature* came into being, with special attention given to the respective negotiations and contestations of the structural features of democratic political outlines in the discursive mode of rhizomatic panopticism. For further contextualization, I proceed by reconstructing the religious and, generally speaking, metaphysical statements made in both tracts and by relating them to prevalent Deist and Unitarian discourses of the same historical periods. On the basis of this understanding of how structural features presupposed by rhizomatic panopticism correlate with those of democratic systems, of how these structural features were negotiated during the nation building endeavors of the Early Republic, the French Revolution, and the Antebellum, and of what characteristics determined the expression of Paine's and Emerson's metaphysical beliefs, I continue to examine specific instances of the application of the discourse of rhizomatic panopticism. Thus, I first focus on the representations of the gaze as that element which guarantees connection, reciprocity, and equality in a normative, rhizomatically panoptic space. I then examine the representation of transparence in both texts, suggesting that it functions as a discursive vehicle to negotiate various aspects of political representation in democratic societies. After that, I proceed with the analysis of passages that pertain to the material manifestations of these principles in sociopolitical terms and trace the authors' construction of some material characteristics of normative, idealized societies in their tracts. Finally, I analyze Paine's and Emerson's constructions of the normative citizen, defined in both texts mainly through his[1] engagement of various aspects of visual perception.

The analysis repeatedly shows that the metaphysical vocabulary as well as the vocabulary of exegetic criticism liberates both Paine and Emerson from the formulation of the possible in strictly material terms. Thus, their elaborations on what is presented as metaphysical truths and assumptions, if read politically or with potential political meanings in mind, can complete, and also productively complicate deductions of both authors' political thought from their more overtly political tracts. For example, a more complete view could in this manner be achieved on the processes of political representation that both

[1] As the last chapter shows, Paine and Emerson reproduce some aspects of hegemonic constructions of citizenship of their day and represent masculinity as one of the prescriptive traits of the normative, idealized citizen. Therefore, the male personal pronoun will be utilized here in referencing the citizen in the context of both authors' tracts. This choice does not aim to affirm or iterate the exclusions patent in such a conception, but to explicate them and keep them in focus throughout the analysis.

treated as acceptable and desirable. Additionally, the comparative aspect of the present analysis can further clarify that the employment of a discourse of rhizomatic panopticism in order to construct a normative outline of a democratic sociopolitical structure is neither always already oppositional nor essentially hegemonic by design, to briefly nod to Stuart Hall's proposed terminology for interpreting coding and decoding practices. Much rather, this specific discourse can be modified and nuanced to occupy a variety of positions relative to that of an established hegemonic formation embodying and exerting political power.

As several points of comparison in the course of the proposed close readings indicate, both authors exemplify a critical, if not always outright oppositional, stance to the hegemonic outlines of normative political structures of their time. Yet Paine does so rather more continuously and stringently than can be said for Emerson, who often resonates with the ideological imperatives of Jacksonian Democracy. This divergence between Paine and Emerson also proves useful when it comes to explaining the divergence in their respective receptions, which is a sideline interest of the presented investigation. As Joe Webb points out, Paine and Emerson can be located along a line of continuity when it comes to the employment of vocabularies pertaining to a metaphysical or a religious semantic field. Yet upon the publication of *The Age of Reason*, Paine was cast as an enemy of religion generally and even famously contracted the condemning description as a "filthy little atheist" at the hands of Theodore Roosevelt (e. g. Ayer 140). Emerson, on the other hand, as mentioned advanced to the status of a revered and respected "public intellectual" after the publication of *Nature*. While the initial anonymity of this publication (cf. Marx 12) may have shielded Emerson from some of the outrage that his departure from traditionalist Calvinism sparked, I suggest that his less stringent rendition of rhizomatic panopticism as an oppositional discourse may have impacted his rather more favorable reception, in spite of his discourse's fundamental homology to that of Paine. On which structure precisely this homology is based is the subject of the following chapter.

2. From the "Surveillant Assemblage" to Rhizomatic Panopticism

I propose an analysis of Paine's *The Age of Reason* and Emerson's *Nature* utilizing a theoretical framework that combines the concept of Foucault's Panopticon with that of Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome. The effort of merging the said concepts as undertaken by

Haggerty and Ericson, and refined by fellow sociologist William Bogard, will serve as the basis of inquiry into the potentials of both poststructuralist concepts. In this section, I first summarize Ericson and Haggerty's argument regarding the initiation of rhizomatic modes of surveillance on account of the impact of digital technologies on both, the practices of observation and the possibilities of subversion of these practices by the observed. The aspect of resistance will receive further attention in the summary of Bogard's amplification of the interdependencies of power and opposition presented by Ericson and Haggerty. On this ground, I revisit Deleuze and Guattari as well as Foucault and elaborate on four points that I regard to be addressed in too narrow a scope by the sociologists; these points are the preconditions conceptually facilitating rhizomatic observation, the idea of the human body implied into a system of such observation, the mechanism of the incorporation of implicit imperatives induced in the observed by the experience of the gaze, and finally the nature of the dichotomy of "hierarchical" vs. "level" emphasized by Ericson and Haggerty. Finally, the resulting generalization of what the sociologists refer to as the "surveillant assemblage," historically contextualized as starting in the late 20th century, will allow a theorization of the broader concept of "rhizomatic panopticism" as a model for the actualization of the sociopolitical ideals of transparence, reciprocity, and accountability in their contiguity to a normative concept of democracy.

As mentioned, the first prominent and most widely perceived fusion of the concepts of the "rhizome" and "panopticism" was carried out in the year 2000 by Ericson and Haggerty in an essay entitled "The surveillant assemblage." In their work, the authors re-evaluate the consequences of surveilling practices as depicted by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* and George Orwell in the novel *1984* from a vantage point that takes into account the immense proliferation of the virtual means of observation and recording in the 20th century, stating that "familiar theoretical preoccupations" (Ericson and Haggerty 606) regarding the practices of surveillance need to be reassessed. The authors put forward the idea of the "surveillant assemblage" (ibid.), which is brought about by the union of multiple, formerly disconnected modes of observation whose function and purpose is defined by "abstracting human bodies" (ibid.) in a manner that produces several unconnected streams of information. These streams converge later on into the form of "distinct data doubles," which is to say virtual copies of the individuals observed, that are made the objects of examination and interference (ibid.). In other words, the authors attribute the becoming rhizomatic of

surveilling practices to the permeation of most ambits of modern life by technologies that facilitate the collection, connection, and evaluation of personalized data. Especially the ever increasing ability to connect and synthesize statistics and figures gathered from different sources of a once non-integrated apparatus of surveillance justifies, according to Ericson and Haggerty, to employ the concept of the "assemblage," which allows the apparatus to obtain a complete picture of the observed individuals' habits and behaviors in the virtual form of the said "data double," making surveillance independent of the observed subjects' physical bodies and material contexts in a deterritorialized system of references. While this assemblage is not entirely appropriated by a state-owned apparatus or exclusively identifiable with the practices of institutions affiliated with the government, institutional control is easily exercised when it comes to accessing and using the data assembled by independent and private entities (ibid. 617, 618).

The impact of digital technology, however, also opens perspectives of resistance, as some of the said flows of deterritorialization apply their effect on the powerful. This kind of reciprocated surveillance "generally exists as a potentiality of connections of different technologies and institutions" (ibid. 618) and is, therefore, not carried out with the same intent of totalizing control. Situations that serve as examples constitute, according to the authors, the use of "relatively inexpensive video cameras" employed "to tape instances of police brutality," which illustrates that "no major population groups stand irrefutably above or outside of the surveillant assemblage" (ibid.). As is also underscored, the possibility of this kind of surveillance gives rise to organized "inner-city citizen response teams which monitor police radios and arrive at the scene camera-in-hand to record police behaviour" (ibid.), which points to their perceived potentials to trace and provide evidence for responsibilities in an endeavor to insist on accountability. Hence, the authors assert the partial emergence of a "rhizomatic leveling of the hierarchy of surveillance" (ibid. 606) stating that segments of society that did not experience observation formerly face the possibility of that very condition now. It can well be said that a certain degree of reciprocity and oscillation of surveilling power thus enters the practice of observation, causing the formerly fixed roles of the observers and the observed to alternate under certain conditions.

Based on the suggestions of Ericson and Haggerty, Bogard develops the implications of a becoming rhizomatic of surveillance further by emphasizing this potentiality of opposition. In his essay "Surveillance Assemblages and Lines of Flight," Bogard agrees with

the conceptualization of the surveillance methods presented by Ericson and Haggerty as "lines of deterritorialization or 'flight'" (97), stating that it is the very deterritorialization of different mechanisms of surveillance, which can be understood, in practical terms, as the shift of the place of surveillance from a concrete, limited location to "digital networks" (ibid.). After, in a similar manner as Ericson and Haggerty, referencing Orwell in order to describe the public perception of such a development as unambiguously curtailing individual freedom and confidentiality, Bogard specifies that these new modes of surveillance effectuate "deterritorialized forms of resistance as a function of their own organization" (ibid.). He goes on to explain that

> [t]here are even good reasons to see prospects for freedom in surveillance assemblages, since networks make it very hard for power to monopolize the machines that identify and track us, or determine the flow and price of information. Control of information becomes more impossible the closer an information network gets to the model of a "rhizome", in which every node must connect to every other node in an open structure. (ibid.)

According to Bogard, what has been thought of as a structure suitable to ensure a totality of surveillance mechanisms and efficiency brings the very conditions for the subversion of this totality. Analogous to Ericson and Haggerty, he is convinced of the difficulty, if not unfeasibility, of the full appropriation of the entire apparatus of surveillance by one entity, provided the configuration of this apparatus resembles the structure of a rhizome, distinctly characterized as following the "[p]rinciples of connection and heterogeneity" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 5). In this manner, what remains a specific example in Ericson and Haggerty's explications, namely the act of filming the powerful by the less powerful who are equipped with recording devices and sharing the footage thus obtained on digital platforms, is given a generalized, conceptual place in Bogard's theory of the resistance potentials of rhizomatic surveillance: Not just the Foucauldian premise of the essential unity of power and opposition in their simultaneous occurrence and mutual necessity (Bogard 98) is the ground on which the theorization of the potential of resistance in a system of rhizomatic surveillance is placed; the very construct of the rhizome itself is conducive to actions running counter to the assemblage's intended function. The above-mentioned "rhizomatic leveling of the

hierarchy of surveillance" (Ericson and Haggerty 606) in its expression of the reciprocating use of the gaze in its potential to demand the visibility of the powerful as well as the visibility of their accountability is thus plausibly shown to be contingent on the theoretical premises of the concept of the "surveillance assemblage."

Although this conception of the "surveillant assemblage" as formulated by Ericson and Haggerty and enriched by Bogard presents an insightful and comprehensive expansion of Foucault's as well as Deleuze and Guattari's original ideas, I shall note four points in which I seek to yet amplify and abstract the sociologist's conclusions. In order to render the merger of the terms of "the rhizome" and "surveillance" operational for my inquiry into Paine's *The Age of Reason* and Emerson's *Nature*, the following qualifications are necessary: First, the cause of the conditions that lead to practices and mindsets facilitating the said merger must be examined. Second, the conception of the body entangled in the transformed system of surveillance is to be specified. Third, the incorporation of implied imperatives, which is not explicitly inquired into by either Bogard or Ericson and Haggerty, will be focused upon. Lastly, the general understanding of the dichotomy of hierarchical vs. level shall be examined in the manifestations that a conceptual union of "the rhizome" and "panopticism" effectuates. In contrast to the quoted sociologists, my starting point is not the empirical, measurable phenomenon of surveillance and resistance to surveillance in digital networks, but rather the original texts delineating the rhizome and the Panopticon; from the definitions presented in *A Thousand Plateaus* and *Discipline and Punish*, respectively, I shall thus infer the conceptual changes of and additions to the terms already introduced in this section.

The first of my qualifications is related to the cause of the phenomena leading to the emergence of the concept of rhizomatic surveillance. The sociologists relate the emergence of rhizomatic surveillance to technological advance. To reiterate their argument it can be said that while the means of surveillance had been available only to the institutions immediately affiliated with the state apparatus in previous decades, these means, and therefore the power of surveillance, have been more widely distributed since the late 20th century: What had been the centers of surveilling power in the past are now but parts of a larger whole and can become objects of surveillance at any moment. All in all, the said authors' portrayal of the development towards "rhizomatic surveillance" can be classified as contingent upon the development, distribution, and public acceptance of the said means of

surveillance among a society's different demographics, making the actual manifestation of "rhizomatic surveillance" a rather accidental by-product of technological advance. In this placement of the conceptual beginning of rhizomatic modes of surveillance in the last decades of the 20th century I disagree with the authors.

As an alternative, I suggest the physical activity of gazing as the appropriate starting point for the conceptual merger: Establishing the first and second principles of the rhizome, namely "connection and heterogeneity," Deleuze and Guattari postulate that "any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 5). In this context, the term of the "plateau" as "a continuous, self-vibrating region of intensities whose development avoids any orientation toward a culmination point or external end" (ibid. 22, 23) is of importance, for the rhizome is defined as consisting of such plateaus, connected amongst each other by means of the lines of flight, which on their part facilitate movement between the plateaus (ibid. 22; Kacas 30). Setting these connecting lines of flight as identical with the gaze, not specifically with surveillance through digital media as outlined by Bogard, I seek to relocate the faculty of exercising surveillance in the bodily experience of the individual through the physical activity of gazing. Following Deleuze and Guattari's explications in *Anti-Oedipus*, an interpretation of this activity as productive of a seeing machine that is part of a social desiring machine (81) seems plausible. Since, as Dorothea Olkowski explains, the terms of "assemblage" and "machine" are largely conceptually congruent in the works of Deleuze and Guattari (243), the space that incites the production of the desire which calls into being the "surveillant assemblage," though aided by digital technology, can be viewed as the human body. As Olkowski also remarks, basing her views on Elizabeth Grosz's contextualization of Deleuze and Guattari in the philosophies of Spinoza and Nietzsche, both *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* define desire not as an absence of something wanted, but rather as a function that establishes associations and links, aiming chiefly for its very own extension and increase (56). To put it differently, this specific desire "is no longer object-oriented" and thus "ceases to be the desire *for* something and instead becomes a desire *of* something" (Hofmann 301, emphasis in original), which renders the experience of this very desire's intensity, rather than the pursuit of pleasure, the focal objective. The intensities generated by the particular desiring machine, or assemblage, of the gaze define the plateaus and affect the lines of flight associating them. From this point of view, both, the specific, observable fact of rhizomatic surveillance brought into effect by a

"surveillant assemblage" today as outlined by the sociologists, as well as the conceptual possibility of a rhizomatic gaze in relation to a bodily experience, can be understood as not primarily the product of technological advance, but of potential intensities and positive desires produced by the gaze's function.

In order to come back to the conception of the plateaus of intensities constituting the rhizome, considering the construction of the kind of human body involved in a sphere governed by the "surveillant assemblage," the gaze in this context, is necessary. Ericson and Haggerty state that the increasing vagueness of the demarcation between the human and the machine is both an aid to and an effect of the advancing technological modes of the surveillance of the human body (611). While, materially, such a post-biotic transformation of the body might be necessary to ensure the efficiency of a potentially rhizomatic surveillant assemblage, I propose that, conceptually, it is not. In certain ways, the notion that rhizomatic surveillance transforms the observed into a "cyborg" (ibid.), of sorts, limits the conceptual potential of rhizomatic surveillance, as it chiefly aides an understanding of the monitored individual as subjected to a de-humanization that has the sole purpose and effect of intensifying the one-sided exercise of power. In other words, the potential of achieving reciprocity of the exercise and effects of the gaze is debilitated: As explained before, the reversal of that power relation is then exclusively contingent upon the random distribution of recording and tracking technologies among the monitored, to be used by them in oppositional ways.

Following the re-localization of the gaze in the physical experience of desire and intensity, I suggest conceptualizing the body entangled in the sphere of the rhizomatic gaze as a "Body without Organs," outlined in Deleuze and Guattari's propositions. Deleuze and Guattari state that "[e]very BwO [Body without Organs] is itself a plateau in communication with other plateaus on the plane of consistency," which is created and determined by the line of flight and desire (*A Thousand Plateaus* 183). To put differently, a "Body without Organs" constitutes a "node" (Bogard 97) in the network of the rhizome and is composed by agglomerations of intensities; it is also connected to other "nodes" through lines of flight produced by the "seeing machine," or the desire and intensity of gazing. At the same time, the structure and experiences of the "Body without Organs" is not dominated by "that organization of the organs called the organism," but engaged in a process of re-arrangement and re-assessment of these organs and their functions (*A Thousand Plateaus* 184); finally,

the “Body without Organs” represents, according to Grosz, “a body without psychical or secret interior” (qtd. in Olkowski 57), becoming a passageway for intensities, for example the intensity of the gaze.

Examining the architectural and conceptual structure of the Panopticon and its possible transformations under the premises of the rhizome is necessary for further specifying the position of the “Body without Organs” in a sphere of the rhizomatic gaze. For example, the above-mentioned principle of the rhizome’s connection speaks against maintaining the centered, “arborescent” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 15) structure of Bentham’s construction, of which the said conceptualization of the human being as quasi-cyborg is indicative since it maintains an essentially one-sided exercise of the gaze. While the Panopticon’s midpoint is defined through the concentration of the power to connect to the subjects arranged on the side-lines by means of the gaze, the subjects on these side-lines are effectively kept from developing any kind of “horizontal conjunctions” (Foucault 219) through the imposition of “procedures of partitioning” (ibid. 220), leaving those fixed on the side-lines always in the role of “the object of information, never a subject in communication” (ibid. 200). Foucault summarizes this construction as follows:

> The Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen. (202)

Applying the rhizome’s principle of connection to this edifice, I suggest re-associating the dyad by replacing the “peripheric ring” with centers of supervision similar to “the central tower,” establishing thus a network connected by the gaze. Since, in a sphere characterized by a rhizomatic distribution of panoptic centers, these centers are defined by their potential of exercising the gaze and their connectedness to other centers by that very line of flight, they can be set to identify the specific kind of “Bodies without Organs” that consist of the intensities created by the gaze. At the same time, a conception of a rhizomatic arrangement of these foci of intensity renders the term “center” and its hierarchical connotation inappropriate and hints towards a consideration of multiplicity, which is the third principle defining a rhizome according to Deleuze and Guattari (*A Thousand Plateaus* 7).

In a conceptual space defined as rhizomatically panoptic, the mechanism of exercising power through the gaze deserves further inquiry. Bogard as well as Ericson and Haggerty focus on the aspect of surveillance in its function of actual observation and scrutiny; however, they do not elaborate on the specifically rhizomatic transformation of the aspect of the observed individual's incorporation of implicit expectations towards him or her, to which the observer's gaze obliges. While they are aware of the centrality of this very process of "a productive soul training which encourages inmates to reflect upon the minutia of their own behavior in subtle and ongoing efforts to transform their selves" (Ericson and Haggerty 607) to Foucault's original conceptualization of the gaze's operation in prisons, a consideration of this effect in a rhizomatically structured space of observation is not specifically and explicitly expounded. In other words, the question whether and to which extent the powerful segments of society now subject to public, "synoptic" scrutiny (ibid. 618) alter their behavior according to the implicit demands of the observers remains unvoiced and unanswered. Explaining the incorporation of these imperatives into the conduct of the observed, Foucault notes that

> [h]e who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. (Foucault 202, 203)

In a rhizome whose plateaus are connected by means of the intensities produced by the gaze, the faculty of exercising the gaze is no longer a marker of concentrated power, but a faculty characterizing every of the rhizome's "nodes." This transformation of the Panopticon also entails that the "field of visibility" ceases to be a sphere of one-directional oppression. Instead, exposure to the gaze is the general condition of every body comprised by the panoptic rhizome. Thus, the mechanism of embodying the obligations imposed by the gaze is likewise incorporated by every of the rhizome's constituent parts. The leveling of the hierarchy formerly represented by the center through the said dispersion of the ability to cast the gaze is accompanied by the universal subjection of every of the plateaus to the gaze, since it is via the gaze that the connection between these plateaus is established. Hence, the panoptic rhizome is a space in which every constituent is both, emitting the gaze, thereby

imposing implicit imperatives onto the other constituents in connection with it, and subject to the gaze, hence also subject to the "inscriptions" of the implicit demands communicated by the other constituents through their watch; both, the gaze and the subjection communicated by it become omnidirectional and reciprocating.

The described process of assuming the implicit obligations carried by the gaze can be read as processes of becoming, typical of the relations between the rhizome's constituents. As described by Deleuze and Guattari in the "[p]rinciple of asignifying rupture" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 8), a "capture of code, surplus value of code, an increase in value, a veritable becoming" takes place between elements rhizomatically connected via the interaction along the streams of intensities and lines of flight (ibid. 9). This means that the process by which the observed individual assumes certain behaviors resulting from the awareness of his or her subjection to a gaze should not be read solely as a type of deliberate playing or impersonation of an expected role; rather, this process can be seen as "an exploding of two heterogeneous series on the line of flight composed by a common rhizome that can no longer be attributed to or subjugated by anything signifying" (ibid.). More precisely, the gaze induces the observed, representing one of the heterogeneous series, to relinquish the notion of his or her presumed state of stable, personal integrity and to incorporate into the code that denotes him or her another component in the form of certain atypical conducts that seem discontinuous regarding prior behaviors thought of as intrinsic or unforced – a process that points to the various increases of code that constitute the becoming of the individual according to Deleuze and Guattari (Kacas 28). On account of the omnidirectional and reciprocating character of the gaze in a system of rhizomatic panopticism as well as the elimination of a center with the exclusive ability to initiate the gaze, this process of becoming through the association along the line of flight of the gaze affects every plateau contained in the rhizome. Because of this advancement of connectivity through becoming and the resulting "experimentation in contact with the real" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 12) the system of rhizomatic panopticism can be viewed to express the last principle postulated by Deleuze and Guattari to characterize the rhizome, namely the "[p]rinciple of cartography" (ibid. 11). Applying this principle to the mechanism of the communication and realization of imperatives implies not to interpret an apparent complicity with these imperatives as a "reproduction" of a given structure of behavior, but to regard it as the expression of an association "between fields," and in this manner to read the relation of observer and

observed as a “map” (ibid. 12), on which both are located, and on which the described processes of becoming are actualized.

In this context, the supposition regarding the leveling of the hierarchies of surveillance in a rhizomatic structure explained by Ericson and Haggerty must be further investigated. In spite of the apparent correctness of an obliteration of hierarchies in a structure characterized by reciprocity and omnidirectional movement, certain limitations must be kept in consideration if Deleuze and Guattari’s elaborations are to be regarded in their complete extent. As pointed out in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the rhizome’s potential to dissolve arborescent hierarchies is not at all moments fully realized; rather, the rhizome remains a highly diverse and multifaceted structure that contains conflicting and opposing spatial arrangements, wherefore hierarchies still remain a potential, temporarily emerging part of it. Deleuze and Guattari describe this rhizomatic feature:

> If it is a question of showing that rhizomes also have their own, even more rigid, despotism and hierarchy, then fine and good: for there is no dualism, no ontological dualism between here and there, no axiological dualism between good and bad, no blend or American synthesis. There are knots of arborescence in rhizomes, and rhizomatic offshoots in roots. (*A Thousand Plateaus* 21)

As grows apparent, insisting on the dichotomy of “hierarchical” vs. “level” is in its principle un-rhizomatic: The rhizome is marked by its ability to integrate heterogeneous structures and intensities without either producing pronounced, particularly valorized binary oppositions or harmonizing inconsistencies, as such functions are said to be typical of the centered tree structure. A mythologized construction of a rhizomatic American “West” in contrast to the “East” influenced by European arborescent sociopolitical arrangements prompts the authors to depict America as the place of such harmonization, in which “everything comes together, tree and channel, root and rhizome” (ibid. 20, 21). While it is, in contrast, true that the rhizomatic structure is conceptualized as potentially obliterating and subverting present hierarchies, it does not seek to harmonize or synthesize heterogeneous streams and even provides a space for such hierarchies to develop. However, rather than problematizing the term’s reference to these conflicting potentials of dissolving, integrating, and generating hierarchies and asymmetrical modes of control and oppression, Ericson and

Haggerty use the adjective “rhizomatic” chiefly as a synonym for “level” and thus run the risk of emaciating the term of its conceptual precision.

To summarize the result of the merger of Foucault’s concept of panopticism and Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of the rhizome it can be stated that a productive starting point is the human body’s physical ability to exercise the gaze. The potentials of desire and intensity that the gaze engenders lead to a redefinition of the body, conceptualizing it precisely as a site of the said desires and intensities, rendering it a “Body without Organs” experiencing intensity through the gaze. Being itself a plateau in a rhizomatic structure of a multiplicity of plateaus, the “Body without Organs” is connected to every other plateau by means of the gaze, which emanates from it but whose object it also becomes. The rhizomatic space thus composed is defined by the omnidirectional lines of the panoptic gaze, which communicates imperatives and facilitates “experimentation” with them in various processes of becoming that connect heterogeneous plateaus. A space thus governed by the outlined characteristics of rhizomatic panopticism is marked by the reciprocity of both, the gaze and the power to induce the said processes of becoming. The visibility of the essentially non-centered, non-hierarchical multiplicity included in such a space is all-comprising. At the same time, this space retains the potential of spontaneously forming and subsequently dissolving hierarchical structures.

Regarding such a construction of what I call “rhizomatic panopticism,” one can pose the question of whether it is opportune to retain the presence of a signifier so directly related to the “panopticon” in the term that I suggest for the structure described. After all, the term of the panopticon, as shown by presenting Foucault’s theorization, is fundamentally prefaced on the very one-directional vector of the gaze and thereby of the one-sided distribution of surveilling power. Thus, to alter the structure of the panopticon, but to retain its name for the new structure that thus emerges as a result of its change, might seem to render the panopticon’s conceptual demarcations less differentiated as opposed to more nuanced. Aware of this deviation from the original Benthamite structure as theorized by Foucault, I insist on its usage for the alternative structure that I propose on account of two reasons:

Firstly, I aim at rendering the genesis of the conceptualization of the structure I outline in this chapter visible in the very term I use to refer to it. As shown, what I call “rhizomatic panopticism” is a result of further deliberating the structure sketched by

Foucault and can thus be considered a derivative thereof. The same can be said of the incorporation of the signifier related to the “rhizome” into the term that I utilize to refer to the proposed structure. While the rhizome can be understood as a system operating with intensities generally as connectors in a field of multiplicity, I devise a structure in which these intensities are defined in specifically visual terms. Nonetheless, I retain the signifier referring to the rhizome in order to point to the overarching theoretical discourse from which my specific conceptualization is derived. Thus, the terminological continuity is intended to denominate a conceptual continuity, albeit not congruence, with the theorizations of Foucault as well as Deleuze and Guattari. In other words, the term “rhizomatic panopticism” is supposed to indicate its own genealogy and theoretical reference points.

The consideration of the said conceptual continuity conditions the second reason for retaining a referent directly denoting panopticism in the term I propose. In spite of the structural alterations to the panopticon on which my conceptualization is based, the Foucauldian principle of panopticism operative in that altered structure preserves more of its characteristics than it sheds. As described, the structural provisions of the construct outlined above heavily rely on the inscription of implied imperatives mediated by the gaze into the very being of those observed or deemed observed. Hence, “panopticism” rather than simply “surveillance” as proposed by Ericson and Haggerty is the term of choice in the context of my conceptualization. The use of the term “surveillance” is apt to focus attention on the material methods of panopticism rather than on its principle and theoretical potentials. Recalling the presentation of commonly conducted research in the field of surveillance studies, one can suppose that the general interest in the material and empirical manifestations of the principle of panopticism is reflected in the terminological choice in this instance, as Ericson and Haggerty are interested in some of the concrete shapes of the panoptic principle. Since the interest of this thesis is the exploration of the theoretical potentials of panopticism rather than its concrete, physical forms, it seems more suitable to utilize the term that denominates the principle in order to denominate my interest.

Furthermore, “surveillance” as a concept seems to put institutions and governments into a privileged position by highlighting their surveilling power in terms of its antecedence; other forms of a non-institutional or non-governmental kind of agency that actualize themselves in terms of surveillance are portrayed as reactions to the hegemonic actors

employing surveillance in the first place. The rhizomatically panoptic structure proposed in this chapter, however, does not presuppose an identifiable primary source of the gaze to which reaction and opposition or resistance are developed. Rather than conceiving of what might be called the counter-gaze as a secondary phenomenon denoting resistance to surveillance as a display of a primarily unilateral quality of power, rhizomatic panopticism implies that reciprocity is a feature of the gaze that is in operation at all times. Thus again, the use of the term denominating the overarching principle of panopticism seems to be warranted.

3. Concepts in Normative Outlines of Democracy

As the present chapter elucidates, the hitherto established structural markers of what I refer to as rhizomatic panopticism correspond with those of various normative outlines of democracy. As the clearly established focus of my attention in this part of the thesis is the normative outline rather than the actual, empirically observable, material conditions and manifestations of particular democracies, a brief specification of the distinction between the normative and the empirical in the context of the structuralist study of democratic outlines and systems is in order. At the very beginning of his inquiry into the conceptual history of democracy entitled *Democratic Theory*, Giovanni Sartori states the keen importance of bearing in mind the friction between an ideal and the reality of that very form of political organization. He writes:

> What democracy *is* cannot be separated from what democracy *should* be. A democracy exists only insofar as its ideals and values bring it into being. No doubt, any political system is sustained by imperatives and value goals. But perhaps a democracy needs them more than any other. For in a democracy the tension between fact and value reaches the highest point, since no other ideal is farther from the reality in which it has to operate. And this is why we need the name democracy. Notwithstanding the disadvantage that it gives no information about the real world, it helps to keep ever before us the ideal – what democracy ought to be. (Sartori, *Democratic Theory* 4; emphasis in the original)

The significant factors that Sartori makes a point to underline when it comes to regarding the conceptual challenges of dealing with analyzing polities is the centrality of abstract principles. These principles, as Sartori then states, go on to structure any kind of political system, but particularly democracy, in a teleological manner. They do not do so only by default, but rather serve as a very conscious "ideal" and even ethico-moral objective for political agents to strive toward and against which to check current conditions.

Although Sartori's remarks may seem somewhat high-strung and unduly ripe with a certain pathos for what are preliminary considerations to a study of the theoretical underpinnings and historical conditions of democratic polities, these remarks are a good indicator of two interesting facts: Firstly, democracy is often awarded a very special position in scholarship with regard to both its occurrence and its desirability. As Charles Tilly points out, if any coherent set of parameters is to be applied to the study of political and state organizations throughout history, one particular conclusion will assert itself, namely that "[d]emocracy is a modern phenomenon" (29), in spite of frequent affirmations to the contrary that cite a very low standard as sufficient for a political system to qualify as a democracy (ibid.). As Tilly contentiously puts it, "[i]f, under the heading of democracy, all we are looking for is negotiated consent to collective decisions, democracy extends back into the mists of history" (ibid.). Secondly, and following in part from the first point, in order to engage meaningfully with the concept of democracy, the parameters that are included into its definition must be carefully defined. This essential requirement of a careful definition of parameters when it comes to operating with the term of democracy is of increased importance in the face of the aforementioned special position, or, as it were, the ideological hyper-semanticization of the term.

As a first approximation towards clarity of definition of the term of democracy, it is important to regard the distinction between normative and descriptive models of democratic systems. Sartori emphasizes the importance of postulating two definitions whenever the topic of democracy and its meaning is raised, namely one that attends to the ideal outline and one that focuses on the empirically ascertainable reality of political organization (Sartori, *Democratic Theory* 4). In this instance, Sartori identifies the necessity of defining the concept of "democracy" along the lines of the binary opposition of two contrary poles, namely "descriptive" vs. "prescriptive," the former describing existing material circumstances of political organization, the latter referring to the "normative and

[…] persuasive function" of the concept when it denotes an ideal (ibid.). He then further specifies his argument regarding a productive approach to providing definitions for the term in question:

> So, to avoid starting out on the wrong foot we must keep in mind three points: first, that a firm distinction has to be made between the *ought* and the *is* of democracy; second, that this distinction must not be misunderstood, because, clearly, ideals and reality interact (without its ideals a democracy cannot materialize and, conversely, without a basis of fact the democratic prescription is self-denying); third, that although complementary, the prescriptive and the descriptive definitions of democracy must not be confused, because the democratic ideal does not define the democratic reality, and vice versa, a real democracy is not, and cannot be, the same as an ideal one. (ibid. 4, 5; emphasis in the original)

Sartori's attention to the relation between the prescriptive and the descriptive sides of the concept of democracy are of great importance, as he is keenly aware of the potentially deceptive nature of the binary opposition operating between these two terms and seemingly positioning them at opposite conceptual poles. While earnestly upholding the notion that both aspects are indeed separate and must be regarded as such to facilitate an accurate analysis, Sartori also underlines the significance of ideals for material conditions in the second point. This means that both poles are located in a relation of interaction and reciprocal impact, but not, as the third point makes once again clear, in a condition of perfect congruence or reciprocal definition or causation. Here, the aforementioned ascription of a "persuasive function" to the prescriptive pole of democracy explains the impact directed at the present material conditions very well and references its aforementioned role as an ethico-moral telos that to some extent shapes these very present material conditions. At the same time, as Sartori intimates, it should not be forgotten that the formulation of an ideal is always to some extent predicated on the conditions in which the formulation takes place. In short, while an ideal often functions as a compelling imperative, it is rarely devoid of vestiges of present conditions or completely dissociated from them.

At this point, it is once again convenient to specify that the present analysis focuses on the "prescriptive definition" of democracy as provided by *The Age of Reason* and *Nature* respectively. In the context of the present thesis, it is further particularly relevant to heed Sartori's statement concerning the mutual impacts that the material circumstances of democracy on the one hand and its "prescriptive" outlines on the other exert. This analysis particularly focuses on the gradient of influence that emanates from what Sartori would call "real" conditions or "democratic reality" (*Democratic Theory* 5) and impact the "ideal." In terms more specifically rendering the outlook of this thesis, I postulate that the experience of political "real" conditions in the national contexts of the Early Republic, of revolutionary France, and of Jacksonian Democracy prompted Paine and Emerson to write texts that contained negotiations and alternative, "prescriptive" outlines of democratic models of political organization. These alternative "prescriptive" outlines present themselves as disquisitions on theological and philosophical topics and use corresponding discourses and vocabularies. The theological and philosophical vocabularies, as close readings of both texts reveal, show considerable structural homologies with political ones pertaining to a negotiation and construction of political systems. Further, these alternative prescriptive outlines of democratic systems as devised by Paine and Emerson, as I argue, are best conceptualized as polities operating on the basis of the principles of rhizomatic panopticism. This means that both authors' alternative constructions of political systems privilege immediacy between rulers and ruled, accountability, a multiplicity of power centers, social mobility.

As said, this hypothesis implies that Paine and Emerson devised alternative models of government to the prescriptive norms that dominated political thought and discourse during the historical periods in which *The Age of Reason* and *Nature* were produced. During the historical phases in question, the most commonly discussed prescriptive or ideal model of political organization was that of a so-called "mixed government." This outline assumes that for a polity to avoid becoming a tyranny, a balanced presence of the three political systems of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy must be present. The first philosophers to identify the said three forms of government are commonly pointed out to be Plato, Aristotle, and Polybius, whose writings had different degrees of differentiation on the matter (Comstock Weston 137). Especially Aristotle's categorization is of interest in this context, as he postulates a model based on binary oppositions in which a successful kind of governmental

organization is juxtaposed to a "corrupted" one, both exemplifying the same principle of numerical participation in the execution of political power: In this manner, one ruler alone can bring about either a monarchy or its corrupted form of the tyranny, few rulers can organize an aristocracy or its negative counterpart of the oligarchy, and finally many participants in political power can effectuate either a polity, or a democracy, interestingly the negatively marked term both in Aristotle and in the subsequent theory of mixed government, until replaced by terms like "ochlocracy" and "mob-rule" later on (Comstock Weston 137; Wood, *The Creation* 198). Polybius particularly refers to the importance of "checks and balances," for only the mutual control of the elements representing the mentioned forms of government prevents the whole organization of the state from assuming the shape of one of the three negatively connoted kinds of government – a stance widely received and iterated by later political theorists and philosophers up to the Renaissance (Comstock Weston 138). Joseph R. Conlin notes that especially the conservatives and Federalists of the Early Republic shared this stance with regard to democracy, contending that "people left to their own devices would destroy liberty," and further maintaining that "[u]ncontrolled democracy led to despotism" (167). As Wood formulates it, "[o]nly through this reciprocal sharing of political power by the one, the few, and the many, could the desirable qualities of each be preserved" (*The Creation* 198).

Arguments into which the model of mixed government was implicated historically reveal a great deal about the potentials of this model to be abused by those in power. Corinne Comstock Weston identifies and explains one of the earliest and most prominent instances in which an explicit reference to the theory of mixed government was made in 17th-century England: When Charles I declined granting Parliament prerogatives that would have curtailed his own privileges, he did so on the basis of what Comstock Weston calls "the classical theory of the English constitution" (133). His justification adduced the alleged equilibrium and perfection of the English political system that separated prerogatives between "the three pure forms of government that political theorists derived from Aristotle" so aptly as to effectively prevent the remotest contingency of "tyranny" (ibid.). Thus, he presented his denial to meet parliamentary demands as an act of preserving that equilibrium (ibid.). Comstock Weston argues that the formulation of this theory implied that Charles left behind the previously customary justification of royal reign through "divine right" and legitimized a conception of mixed government as the new normative outline (135).

The theory of government formulated in Charles's "Answer" remained the dominant one in England well into the 19th century (ibid. 134). Hence, Comstock Weston identifies Charles Stuart's "Answer" to the parliamentary "Nineteen Propositions" as a major document in British political theory with significant "influence on English constitutional development" (134), while she is also aware that the second Stuart king merely gave written expression to a theory that was present, if not to the same degree of articulation and approval, in "Tudor England" (137). As she further points out regarding the importance of the Stuart king's "Answer" to Parliament and the political theory therein entailed:

> If the statements of Charles I were no longer invoked as the progenitor of prevailing constitutional theory, still the Answer remained easily available and directly or indirectly inspired the classical descriptions of the English government that flowed from the pens of Montesquieu, Sir William Blackstone, J. L. DeLolme, William Paley, and Edmund Burke. (Comstock Weston 136)

The enumeration of the political philosophers adhering to the theory of mixed government and its alleged superiority to other systems does not only reflect the long-lasting importance of a system first explicitly used by a Stuart in 17th-century England; its last element, namely Edmund Burke, also once again calls to mind this theory's importance in the context of this thesis: Burke was, of course, a chief and prominent opponent of Paine's political thought and stood in a public dialogue with him precisely over the topic of political organization in the context of the French Revolution. At the same time, the first element of the enumeration, Montesquieu, illuminates further this system's importance in the French national context, but also in that of the Early Republic as this philosopher, along with John Locke, served as a source of political ideas after the American Revolution (Schissler 53).

This prescriptive model is also of particular importance when it comes to understanding the political debates during the Early Republic. In view of the pervasive conceptual attachment to what Comstock Weston calls the "classical theory of the English constitution" (133), Gordon S. Wood indicates in his seminal *The Creation of the American Republic* that "most Americans set about the building of their new states in 1776 within the confines of this theory of mixed government, for independence and the abolition of monarchy had not altered the basic postulates of the science of politics" (202). As Wood

further explains, it was not the theory or the concomitant potential governmental arrangement against which American colonists protested – much rather it was the perceived disruption of the mentioned equilibrium between the respective elements of the mixed government in favor of the monarchical component that summoned their discontent (ibid. 201). Surprisingly, as Wood specifies, "the Americans to the very end of the imperial controversy justified their constitutional opposition to English policy not by abjuring the theory of mixed government but by using and affirming it" (ibid.). In Sartori's terms, the theory of mixed government can well be understood as the prescriptive outline of governmental organization upheld by the political classes of the colonies during the revolutionary period. As Wood remarks, "[t]he English constitution, properly understood and balanced, remained for the Americans at the time of Independence the model of how a government should be structured" (*The Creation* 200). As the following chapter shows, this valorization of mixed government can also be read to account for the negative evaluation of the political organization proposed by the Articles of Confederation as the precursor of the Constitution of the United States of America, as it ostensibly overlooked the imperatives formulated by the ideal in question, not rendering them manifest in the form of a presidency and a bicameral representative body.

It is of particular interest that the allegedly radical oppositional stance towards the tyrannical streak of monarchy professed in American national founding documents and iterated in hegemonic narratives of American revolutionary history did not imply a structural reorganization of normative political theories. Much rather, American politicians could reconcile the theory's imperative to maintain a "monarchical element" with relinquishing monarchy by abstracting the constitutional functions of the monarch from the figure of the concrete king and transferring them onto the elected officials occupying the same structural spot (Wood, *The Creation* 206). This circumstance indicates that in spite of the abolition of monarchy and the insistence on political values such as liberation and freedom most commonly associated with the form of government in which the many are in power (ibid. 198), Americans during the Revolution and the Early Republic remained invested in the structural presence of a monarchical element within their political system.

Likewise, the preservation of the theory of mixed government implies the acceptance of the concomitant terminology, and thus a negative connotation of the signifier of "democracy" as a deeply undesirable political system. Even its positively connoted

counterpart, it follows, cannot be conceived without always already being tied to the negative image of "democracy" as chaotic and anarchical "mob-rule." The political organization in which, as it were, the many rule, was by no means considered in and of itself a valuable and beneficial form of government. Instead, it was connoted with the ever present danger of deranging into potentially dangerous and unstable disorder, which was referred to as "democracy." Merely a supplementary component that has little value on its own, the concept of "democracy" as a political system in which the many rule, either orderly or disorderly, received little valorization by those in power and in charge of drafting political outlines and constitutions during the American Revolution and in the Early Republic. The concept, to put it differently, had no prescriptive power in its own right. Put yet in another manner, the politicians and political theorists of the Early Republic never intended for the newly forming state to adopt a governmental system in which the rule of the many, or for that matter of the people, was encouraged beyond its very strict assignment within the institutional confines prescribed by the theory of mixed government. Mogens Herman Hansen adduces similar statements in his seven points that according to his analysis of the heritage of Athenian democracy in Western political thought characterize the general perception of democracy. For example, Hansen states that this political system has not been investigated "in its own right" and viewed merely as one among the three chief forms of governmental organization best kept within the constrains of a mixed government, that its evaluation has been "mostly hostile," and that it has been denigrated as "impracticable" (17).

Naturally, here the objection can be posed that not only democracy, but also monarchy and aristocracy were regarded as insufficient and undesirable if unchecked by other complimentary elements, and useless unless employed to also check those other complimentary elements. However, Charles Stewart's "Answer" to parliamentary demands shows the potentials of this system to be used in order to maintain a status quo favoring one of the elements supposedly composing the system with equal dispositions of power. Particularly the monarchical component seems to be in a potentially privileged position in contrast to the other elements of which mixed government is comprised. Certainly, such an analysis exceeds the plane of the strictly prescriptive regard of the system of mixed government. Nonetheless, it directs attention to the structural predisposition towards

effecting unequal gradients of power between the components supposedly in a state of equilibrium of power.

Interestingly, the Athenian and Roman models of ancient democracies and republics are often said to have inspired especially the American imaginary when it comes to the design of normative models of national polities (e. g. Mullett 97); this competing normative outline put much stronger emphasis on the presence of democratic elements in the system. Paine and Emerson, as has been mentioned and will be argued throughout the paper, devise systems of government in their tracts that vary significantly from the prescriptive systems of their day. In many ways, the normative systems outlined by both authors are much more in line, although by no means congruent, with the normative model of Athenian democracy as it emerged around 500 BCE (cf. Lucardie 44-48) and in the way it is described today by many political scientists.

Elucidating the elements contributing to the formation of a particular democratic structure in Athens, David Held reminds the reader that

> [o]f all the factors that could be stressed, it was the conjunction perhaps of the emergence of an economically and militarily independent citizenry in the context of relatively small and compact communities that nurtured a democratic way of life […]. Political changes took place within geographically and socially demarcated communities of a few thousand people living closely together either within one urban centre or within the surrounding countryside. In these communities, communication was relatively easy, news travelled quickly and the impact of particular social and economic arrangements was fairly immediate. Questions of political culpability and responsibility were almost unavoidable, and the kinds of obstacle to political participation posed by large, complex societies were not yet significant. (Held 12)

Certainly, Held's condensed account presents in itself a normative rather than a descriptive approximation of what the construct of Athenian democracy resembled, even though he himself does not dwell on the implication of the binary of normative vs. descriptive in the same way that for instance Sartori does. Nonetheless, Held's summary of the circumstances that facilitated Athenian democracy and of the characteristics that marked the settlements in which it was practiced intimates why Athenian democracy seems to have captured the

imaginations of both, the framers of the American Constitution (cf. Tolbert Roberts 175-207) and those of the scholars of democracy and political scientists later on; Held himself underlines the fact that this particular democratic outline can be regarded as "a central source of inspiration for modern political thought" (13). Its structure seems to suggest the ideal conditions to direct involvement of the citizen into the process of political decision making. While Held himself diligently points to the vast exclusivity of the Athenian conception of the citizen, this status being available only to "free adult males of strictly Athenian descent" (ibid.), elements that are commonly associated with a normative and positively connoted conception of democracy such as self-rule are always represented to have characterized the democracy of Athens. The confident and unapologetic consciousness of the citizenry, the local orientation of the political organization, the potential direct contact of community members between each other on account of limited community size, the concomitant ease of information distribution and connectivity between members along those lines, as well as the preoccupation with accountability and ensuring political participation are the defining features of Athenian democracy according to Held.

As Held points out on the basis of a speech delivered by Pericles that praises the virtues of the democracy of Athens, it was the "*demos*" which "held sovereign power, that is, supreme authority, to engage in legislative and judicial functions" (14). The conception of the citizen implied a very marked convergence of the realm of the individual and of the political (ibid.), postulating it to be within the essence of the individual as citizen to take a very immediate interest and participation in the political affairs of the community (ibid.). Also analyzing a speech by Pericles, James L. Hyland states that this convergence sketched a citizen who exhibited "a high level of political knowledge," accepted that an "involvement in politics is an integral part of the citizen's life," and was ready to "defend the democracy," while also attending to non-political interests (164). In short, the citizen was to "look after his own business, participate in political life and be as good a soldier as the Spartan whose whole life is devoted to military training" (ibid.). This convergence also conditions, as Held further elucidates, the lack of a conceptual dichotomization "between state and society, specialized officials and citizens, 'the people' and government" (Held 14). In contrast to this binary mode of conceiving of a polity, which Held locates to have emerged in modernity with thinkers such as Machiavelli and Hobbes, "this city-state celebrated the notion of an active,

involved citizenry in a process of self-government; the governors were to be the governed" (ibid).

In this overlap, major differences to more current conceptions of the citizen are visible. As Held puts it, "politics in this conception demanded a great deal of people, yet this was not seen as a violation but an affirmation of their capacity for autonomy. Political order was presented as a vehicle for expressing and realizing their nature […]" (14). To put differently, the society of the polis and its political structure thus appear as a sphere that enables the individual to actualize sides of his personality or being, commonly denominated with the perhaps overly positively connoted noun of "virtues," that characterize him as a citizen and in this manner facilitate fuller self-actualization. In the 20th century, the expectation of self-actualization is much more commonly found in the formulation of a demand rather than as an acknowledged default function or product of political participation. An example is the political theory of C. B. Macpherson, who situates his work against the tendency to view the human being as "essentially an infinite consumer and infinite appropriator," refuting the "market concept of man's essence" (36). Thus Macpherson postulates "the basic criterion of democracy to be that equal effective right of individuals to live as fully as they may wish. This is simply the principle that everyone ought to be able to make the most of himself, or make the best of himself" (51). Here, self-actualization appears as a "right" that must be asserted in a political system bent on reducing the human being to the role of a "consumer of utilities" (ibid.). By way of contrast, ancient democracy granted that right in its normative premises. However, self-actualization in the context of Greek democracy must not be conflated with today's individualism. As Held explains, according to "Plato's view and, more generally, in ancient Greek thought, it is worth bearing in mind that the freedom the state secures is not so much for the individual *per se*, but for his ability to fulfil his role in the universe" (26; emphasis in the original). Again, it is also necessary to be mindful of the exclusions operating in this imagination of the individual's implication into the larger whole in ancient Greece: If, as Cynthia Farrar puts it, "[p]olitics was the expression of the freedom to participate in ordering one's own life," then it must be said that this was "a freedom denied to women or slaves and unavailable to indentured peasants" (18, 19).

The affinity between the idealized, normative descriptions of Athenian democracy and the idealized perception of certain features of American democracy as expressed in

hegemonic discourses as well as in a lot of scholarship is a striking one in many instances. William Schneider's analysis of professionalism in US politics comes to mind as one such instance, in which he states that "[p]rofessionalism and politics don't mix. In fact, most Americans see the two as antithetical" (321). These introductory remarks to an analysis of the 1991 presidential election seem to echo the Athenian refusal to regard the governed and the governing elements of a society as separate entities, the latter grouped in a class of "specialized officials," to once again cite Held (14). Held's parenthetical comment stating that "[t]he importance of public deliberation was not emphasized again in political theory for a long time" (15) once more points to Athenian democracy's appeal for fairly recent scholarship in political science that has postulated concepts such as "deliberative democracy" that focus on the importance of communicative processes for democratic political decision making.

Nonetheless, it is important to come back to the exclusions mentioned by Held that in many ways defined Athenian democracy just as much as its peculiar features that let it appear as a democratic model to be emulated. In his abovementioned 2007 study succinctly entitled *Democracy*, Tilly proposes to define and grade the level of democratic freedom in any one state along the lines of four main parameters. He postulates these parameters to be "Breadth," or the extent to which the "full rights of citizenship" are available to a state's residents (cf. Tilly 14), "Equality," or the distribution of "rights and obligations" in the populace (ibid.), "Protection," in particular "against the state's arbitrary action" (cf. Tilly 15), and finally "Mutually binding consultation," or the extent of the government's "clear, enforceable obligations to deliver benefits by category of recipient" (ibid.). Casting an analytical glance at the question of whether Athenian democracy truly holds up to such democratic standards, Tilly first looks at the conception of the citizen and comes to a tentatively positive answer, adducing some characteristics that in his opinion do warrant their classification as proto-democratic. Here, he points to two factors:

> First, they created a model of citizenship that had no known predecessors. Of course old lineages and the rich enjoyed political advantages in these city-states. In the sovereign assembly, however, every citizen however patrician or parvenu, rich or not so rich, had a voice and a roughly equal relationship to the state. Second, these regimes generally rotated civic responsibilities very widely. Athens even filled its

> magistracies by lot for one-year terms rather than by election or inheritance. Within the citizenry, then, the principle of equal rights and equal obligations prevailed. (Tilly 26, 27)

Resonating with the points that Held identified as conspicuously progressive about the Athenian democratic polity, Tilly puts this ancient Greek model of citizenship at the center of his first deliberation of whether Athens merits the denomination as democracy at all. While Tilly admits that inherited privilege and financial status skewed the distribution of power, he maintains that a general bond of equality between all participating citizens could nonetheless prevail in deliberative and legislative organs. This equality was evidenced by the opportunity to speak in such organs and thus to participate in the deliberative process. It is to be noted that in this instance Tilly remarks on the "equal relationship to the state" that characterized all citizens. This characterization is in so far interesting as the inequality of citizens among each other along the lines of inherited privilege or financial status also features in Tilly's consideration. These inequalities, however, do not exert sufficient influence when it comes to defining the association with the state. Finally, Tilly mentions the frequent rotation of offices and the conscious awareness of the necessity to preempt corruption through the instrument of appointment by lot as indicators of democracy.

Yet Tilly is convinced that, ultimately, the polities of ancient Greece that are commonly accepted to constitute the first democracies do not merit such an appellation (27). He comes to this conclusion after revisiting the four aforementioned parameters defined by himself. Applying these parameters to the polities of ancient Greece now labeled the first democracies in Europe, he comes to a sobering verdict:

> In these city-states, did relations between the state and its citizens feature broad, equal, protected, mutually binding consultation? If we narrow our attention to the free adult males who then qualified as citizens, the answer is probably yes; this is why so many historians have considered the Greeks to have invented democracy. But if we consider the whole population under the state's jurisdiction – women, children, slaves, the many resident foreigners – the answer becomes emphatically no. After all, inequality pervaded the city-state political system as a whole. Athenian arrangements excluded the great bulk of the population from protected, mutually binding

> consultation. Nor did republican Rome perform democratically by these standards. (Tilly 27)

Here, Tilly comes to the conclusion that the applicability of the parameters formerly defined by him to characterize democracy to adult males of a particular descent, as postulated by Athenian citizenship, is not sufficient to describe Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE as truly democratic. Too vast are the exclusion on which this system relied in order to grant democratic rights to a select few, as it would be accurate to maintain that the Athenian normative citizen is male and of Athenian descent, which indicates that very specific exclusions along the lines of gender and ancestry, or ethnicity if one wanted to approximate the ancient concept from a perspective more mindful of modern notions and problems, are built into the prescriptive understanding of the ideal, normative Athenian citizen.

The problem at the heart of this exclusive model of citizenship and civil rights is the conception of participation in the political system. The important factor to consider is that the exclusivity of Athenian citizenship and thus the extremely reduced breadth, as Tilly would express it, of political participation should not be regarded as shortcomings brought about by an imperfect execution of an otherwise democratically participatory and inclusive ideal. It is crucial to keep in mind that the exclusion of an overwhelming majority of the city-states' residents was indeed a constitutive factor of the normative, prescriptive model of a democratic polity, one that was, to once again quote Sartori, vested with a "persuasive function" and serving as a "value goal." Denying citizenship, the concomitant civil rights, and thereby political participation to the female, enslaved, and foreign population was thus a reflection of the highly exclusive ideal of Athenian democracy in its normative form. Keeping in mind that exclusions of an enormous degree can in fact be constitutive parts of normative democratic outlines will foster a better basis for analyzing the texts of *The Age of Reason* and *Nature* as well as the democratic norms that they formulate.

One further element to heed when considering the conception of participation in democratic systems is the general evaluation of participation's desirability or necessity for the system to operate successfully. To revisit Held's view of the organization of the Athenian democratic state and the position of the citizen within it, "the freedom the state secures is not so much for the individual *per se*, but for his ability to fulfil his role in the universe" (Held 26; emphasis in the original). This implies a very specific view on the necessity of individual

participation in political processes which assumes the dimension of a responsibility that well exceeds its merely material implications. The necessity of political participation thus becomes a quasi spiritual duty for those who are encompassed by the superbly narrow definition of citizenship. In contrast to the Athenian model, modern conceptions of participation liken it to an unpleasant chore rather than to a solemn and spiritual duty. Here, the considerations of Albert Weale on the way in which citizens of modern-day democracies dispose of their time are of interest; he writes that

> many of the most satisfying and fulfilling of non-political human activities (playing a musical instrument, writing poetry, climbing mountains, sports and dinner-table conversation, to name but a few) are also time consuming, so that democratic political participation is likely to be in fierce competition with them for the ultimate scarce resource. (92)

It is of particular interest that Weale, even though he does so in a seemingly humorous and partly parenthetical manner, adduces factors such as satisfaction and fulfillment to his contemplation of the likeliness of voluntary citizen participation in democratic processes. Implying that various occupations foster more enjoyment than the engagement in political decision making processes, Weale casts doubt on the universality of the acceptance of more direct citizen participation as eventually desired by the citizens themselves. The subsequently cited study by Berry, Portney, and Thomson of 1993 showing no significant augmentation in direct political involvement of citizens in cities taking measures to achieve this very effect seems to confirm his standpoint (Weale 92). In his own words, Weale comes to the conclusion that Berry, Portney, and Thomson's results are "at least consistent with the claim that the opportunity cost in terms of time forgone of political participation is too great relative to the other activities in which people are involved" (92). Even in Athens, which is upheld as the nearly stereotypical model of citizen participation, citizens, often facing considerable material hindrances when it came to physically attending assembly meetings and were finally encouraged to do so by the payment of a "modest sum of money, almost a day's wage" (Lucardie 46).

The fact that these "activities" engaged in alternatively to undertakings that would count as "political participation" are all identified as hobbies or other primarily recreational

pastimes in the quote further above is germane to the principles operating in rhizomatic panopticism. This classification seems to aid the construction of a very conspicuous binary that figures more or less openly in Weale's expositions on political participation and its every-day alternatives in citizen's lives, namely the binary of enjoyment vs. duty, political participation being ascribed to the latter pole here. Weale thereby postulates that part of why citizens are not easily persuaded to actively and directly participate in political processes is because this participation is less pleasurable and thereby offers fewer opportunities to be experienced as being worthwhile than other undertakings. The tacit assumption in this instance is that time is, as Weale puts it, a "scarce resource" because other factors, presumably work on which citizens depend for their livelihood, already consume a lot of time, but cannot be subsumed under the pole of enjoyment in the aforementioned binary that informs these deliberations. Weale encapsulates the time-related argument in a qualitative discussion of democracy types most tersely when he states that "[t]he argument for representation therefore is that citizens have a generalized interest in preserving time for the full range of activities in which they might engage, and direct democracies would erode that time" (93).

Reading this rather sober view of participation against the conception thereof in a normative model of Athenian democracy, a great distinction cannot but reveal itself as decisive. This distinction is constituted in the view of the importance for the very being of the citizen as individual to exercise active and direct political participation. While the modern conception that draws on empirical data and is rather more descriptive foregrounds those aspects of participation that can be understood as a chore, the ancient one conceives of it as a site of very personal self-actualization that has quasi spiritual undertones. While it is not enjoyment that motivates the citizen's direct participation in political processes in normative renditions of Athenian democracy, the individual certainly engages in this participation out of a feeling of personal necessity and immediate benefit that is linked to the performance of a civic duty. At the same time, participation in a normative Athenian structure can also be conceived of as at least partly a default function of the peculiar social and geographical structure of the ideal community postulated to constitute the basis of this particular polity. As reiterated by many historians and political scientists, the presumed "face-to-face" character of these communities in ancient Greece conditioned very specific dynamics of interaction and informational flow that, in theory, all facilitated participation of

every citizen as a default setting. A democratic system based on a normative conception of rhizomatic panopticism connects the notion of default participation in political processes with that of enjoyment of activity postulated by Weale to be associated rather with the realm of the non-political than that of the political. What has to be kept in mind is the postulation that the system based on rhizomatic panopticism rests fundamentally on a faculty of the body and therefore involves the body of the citizen in a more unmitigated way than for example the normative outline of Athenian democracy does on the level of self-reflexive, theoretical conception.

While participation for the Athenian citizen was normatively associated with the pleasure of upholding communal order and fulfilling an almost religious duty, there seems to be no vestige of a discursive relation of political participation and physical enjoyment or pleasure. It would be inaccurate to say, however, that the body as a category is completely evacuated from any consideration of participation in the Athenian model, as the exclusivity of Athenian citizenship is so clearly linked to two categories that indeed are postulated to impact and mark the body, namely gender and descent. The now normative legal enfranchisement of women and groups formerly excluded from prospects of acquiring citizenship on the grounds of race seems to have removed the necessity of being mindful of conceptions of the body from the considerations of citizenship and participation on the level of prescriptive provisions and normative outlines, even though the descriptive dimension constantly reveals inequalities and exclusions that belie such an ideal.

In most modern conceptions of participation in democracy, as reported by Weale, direct involvement in political processes is much more likely to be seen as a form of impeding the citizen's body to experience enjoyment and imposing upon it further coercive regimes that interfere with its sensations of pleasure. After all, it does strike one as telling that at the very least two of the parenthetically enumerated "non-political human activities" vying for the "ultimate scarce resource" of time can be viewed as primarily physical undertakings, in which the individual engages first and foremost in order to experience the body in relation to the material world outside of itself, namely "climbing mountains" and "sports." This specification indicates that modern-day democratic participation is, according to its normative and theoretical underpinnings, devoid of a physical component that could be experienced as, or is meant to be experienced as, potentially pleasurable.

The phenomenon of political representation comes into play as a qualification of direct political participation. As Hansen reports, "[t]he concept of representative democracy made its first appearance in a letter from Alexander Hamilton written in 1777" (23) and became the prevalent definition of the concept of democracy by the middle of the following century, relegating its predecessor to secondary, merely theoretical consideration always marked by the qualifier "direct" (ibid.). He further recognizes Andrew Jackson as the primary major initiator of political practices based on the tenets of representative democracy (ibid.). This connection of a defining figure of the Early Republican and the chief representative of the Federalist viewpoint with the president decisively shaping the mid Antebellum is of particular importance in the context of the thesis presented. For the conceptual structure of this paper, it is also convenient to reiterate Hanson's rendition of mid 19th-century Swiss reception of the new conception of democracy, for in "1848 the new Swiss federal constitution treated democracy and representation as direct opposites" (23).

In this context, a closer familiarization with the contemporary views on the best arrangement of representation at the time of the production of *The Age of Reason* and *Nature* is in order. A look at the political vocabulary concerning the organization of representation and parliament in England during the latter half of the 18th century provides interesting points of comparison with the vocabulary employed by Thomas Paine in *The Age of Reason* to decry the erroneous ways of the Christian churches. As John Phillip Reid points out in his analysis of the philosophical and legal background of the theories of representation in late 18th-century England, representatives were often given appellations that indicated either their derivative nature with regard to their electorate, or their intervening nature between their electorate and the position to enact political decisions. He also points out that in spite of an apparent consensus regarding the primary role of the electorate, the exact mechanisms by which the core characteristics of accountability governing the relationship between electors and elected functioned was not at all conclusively stipulated (Reid 78). As Reid puts it:

> Constitutional commentators described representatives as "*created* by" the "people at large" and said that Parliament was "the *meer creature* and *dependent* of the people at large," but none developed a jurisprudential explanation of how the creatures accounted to the creators. The reason was largely a matter of implication

> squeezed from certain descriptive designations: at best, law implied by normative titles. (ibid.; emphases in the original)

All of the descriptions of the representative process referenced by Reid operate on the understanding that representatives are in fact secondary to the represented and thus bound by a relationship of dependency and analogy to the latter. Particularly striking is the notion not only of dependence, but also of creation; 18th-century political discourse implies that it is the represented who bring their representatives into existence as such. This metaphor expresses very emphatically that the represented are conceived as superior in rank and power to their derivative representatives. At the same time, Reid clearly qualifies this view as emanating from a prescriptive model of representation and manifesting itself accordingly in "normative titles." However, the legal provisions did not specify any mechanisms of safeguarding accountability so that this presumed, prescriptive superiority of the represented would actually be enforced in reality. Once again, the importance of the distinction between the prescriptive and the descriptive sides of political outlines and terms comes into play.

Reid then remarks more specifically on the "appellations" used for representatives that had greatest currency during the period in question. He states:

> Representatives were called *attorneys*, a word often joined with another such as *advocates*, *servants*, *factotums*, *proxies*, *stewards*, and even *plenipotentiaries*; *trustees*, perhaps the most frequently repeated appellation, was used to suggest that representatives were bound by a trust relationship to secure the well-being of the beneficiaries and, especially, to prove that the representation was not autonomous; *delegates*, was employed quite often to accentuate the fact that representatives were "not *principals*"; and *agents* was used to emphasize that representatives served as an agency conducting the people's business. The nomenclature must be accorded some significance as form, but had none in substance. (Reid 78; emphases in the original)

Ending once again with the qualification that the enumerated designations must be regarded as a due to the normative conception rather than the real condition of representation in

18th-century England, Reid specifies some of those designations and what they were supposed to express. Again, all of the terms used indicated that the representatives derived their authority from those that they represented and were in fact entrusted to operate on their behalf, of which especially the terms "advocates," "servants," "stewards," and "plenipotentiaries" were expressive. Terms such as "factotums" and "agents" are marked by their etymological referencing of action and processes of performance, which are reminiscent of the postulation that the representative's is merely an executive, not however an initiating function, which remains conceptually with the represented. Finally, designations such as "delegates" and "proxies" are most germane to an inquiry into rhizomatic panopticism in the context of *The Age of Reason* and *Nature*. Not only is the latter term of importance for Paine's decrying of abuses of power by the Church (cf. *The Age* 670, 683) as is subsequently shown; these terms also reference the principle of insertion between the represented and the executive function in politics. Thus, the central topic of immediacy in democracy finds itself engaged.

Some of the terms reported by Reid would persevere and are used today by political scientists to classify different modes of representation. The two terms that most prominently structure the discussion of representative modes thus appear in a binary opposition, namely "trustee" vs. "delegate." As Andrew Rehfeld expounds in "Representation Rethought: On Trustees, Delegates, and Gyroscopes in the Study of Political Representation and Democracy," this binary was already present in the Magna Carta (217) and formed a point of contention in the process of negotiating the Constitution of the United States (217, 218). These two terms form distinct answers to the question of "how closely must a representative's votes on legislation correspond to the will of his or her constituents?" (ibid. 214). In this context, as Rehfeld states, these terms

> appear at first to denote different locations of authority about how a representative ought to vote. In 'delegated' representation, we imagine authority located more directly with the home constituency, whereas with 'trusteeship,' we locate authority with the representative him- or herself, who now has the power to act. (ibid. 217)

This allocation of power also implies that delegates are usually "more responsive to sanctions" as they await to be held accountable by their electorates, while trustees are not

as responsive, as they see themselves accountable to “the whole” instead of to the “part” that elects them (ibid. 215).

Apart from the topic of immediacy, the mechanism of representation in democracy also provides a convenient site to discuss once again the importance of the human body to rhizomatic panopticism. In his introduction to theories and concepts of democracy, Anthony Arblaster points out that this particular polity has come to imply the centrality of a form of mechanism of representation, which is a fairly recent conceptual specification (79). To elucidate this conceptual development, he recurs to Thomas Paine and his almost proverbial championing of direct forms of citizen participation in politics. Arblaster writes in this context that

> democrats like Paine originally put forward representation as a means of adapting the democratic principle to societies, such as the United States, which were too large to allow for personal participation by all their citizen. For them it was an expedient, almost a makeshift, and one that contained obvious dangers. (79)

Here, Arblaster uses Paine to reference two different aspects that are of importance when discussing representation. The first of these aspects is the widespread notion that direct democracy is the original form of this specific political arrangement and that mechanisms of representation are therefore best understood as amends necessary to compensate for less than a manifestation of widespread direct citizen participation. Size of communities and concomitant hindrances to information flow are the most common impediments referenced in this context and are also alluded to by Arblaster when he mentions Early-Republic America. Here, Arblaster seems to restate the commonplace notion that “the requirement that all should be involved in crucial decision-making might be appropriate only to small communities or organizations” (Lively 33; also cf. Schmidt 78). The other aspect is the immediate link established by most commentators, often also by the general public, between representative mechanisms and abuse of power, to which Arblaster refers when speaking of “obvious dangers” (79). As Iain McLean quips in the course of his discussion of the pros and cons of direct democracy, “[r]epresentatives can misrepresent” (142). This perception of danger can be connected to the professionalization of politics mentioned above. As Dominique Schnapper puts it, “[t]he simple acknowledgement that a ‘specialized

group of people' exists who are devoted to political activity – and whose existence is linked to the idea of representation – provokes indignation" (184).

How Arblaster discusses both of these aspects subsequently is fairly significant when related to the vocabulary of rhizomatic panopticism. In order to disabuse the reader of the notion of the presumed impracticability of direct democracy in societies of large populaces, Arblaster adduces the familiar argument of the technological advance that has made compensations in this regard possible (84). Following discussions of politicians on television and voting by "free telephone call" are some of the technological mechanisms he makes mention of (ibid.), reiterating those that seem to be commentators' and political scientists' favorites. The ubiquity of the internet has rendered considerations of technological aids to direct democracy even more compelling in recent years. As Stephen Tully surveys the scholarship on the interaction of internet technologies and democratic participation, he reports the widely held view that "[t]he internet is opening up government agency methodologies to public scrutiny, prompting greater transparency, making information more accessible and increasing public participation in agency decision-making" (157, 158). However, his own inquiry into the democratizing potential of social media in the context of legal frameworks yields the conclusion that "the rule of law and technological determinism are engaged in a constant struggle for supremacy" (ibid. 171), which complicates the assumption of a correlation of advances in technology and democracy. Yet even the more pessimistic views on technological advances of democratic participation anticipate an eventual increase in direct democracy by their means. While his 2009 case study of such applications is very mindful of the limits of "e-democracy" and "e-participation" to ensure the extension of direct democratic interaction between citizens and politicians and also states that, as of the time of writing, their use is still circumscribed to a local level, Ángel Iglesias Alonso nonetheless forecasts tentatively that on the basis of such innovations "a new political structure could emerge, to compete with or even replace, to a certain extent, representative democracy" (50).

Directly, Ericson and Haggerty's conception of rhizomatic surveillance comes to mind. What enables citizens, or more generally individuals, to effectuate a greater degree of reciprocity of surveillance between them and the actors endowed with economic and political power has been, as pointed out in the preceding chapter, the increasing and wide-ranging availability of video recording equipment in recent decades. Again, technology is set

to make amends for material conditions that fall short of the ideal. To be more precise, one could suggest that it is physical human incapability of attending or surveilling which is improved by the technological devices mentioned. The fantasy of expanding the capacity of the human body to compensate for the increasing sizes of communities and material challenges can be viewed in and of itself as a somewhat ableist one that puts a very particular norm of the human body at the center of political structures and seeks to reproduce, enhance, and enlarge that very body by technological means. Solutions, such as representative mechanisms, that approach this problem of scale from an angle that does not seek to scale up and transpose the human body into greater material dimensions are viewed, tellingly, as "makeshifts" or compromises rather than solutions in their own right, offering a new paradigm of thought.

To return to the relationship of immediacy characterizing the connection between the participating elements in a system of rhizomatic panopticism, a consideration of further characteristics that emanate out of the immediacy is in order. The term "responsiveness" often used in political science to evaluate the relationship between the ruler and the ruled is helpful in this context. What I have described as an oscillating vector of influence using a vocabulary generated according to the implications of rhizomatic panopticism can be approximated employing the term "responsiveness" which is utilized in describing behaviors within power structures. As James Pennock employs this term in the specific context of a discussion of the characteristics of democratic governments:

> The person or group that exerts influence is influential; the person or group on whom it is exerted is responsive. In government, this is largely what democracy is all about. A democratic government should respond to, reflect and give expression to, the will of the people. (261)

Pennock identifies this very feature of reacting to another entity's influence in accordance with the desires expressed by means of that influence as a key characteristic of democratic government. That the government "exerts influence" and can therefore be termed "influential" might be a tedious observation to state, as the coercive measures at its disposal are often criticized to be too numerous and too invasive to be accidentally overlooked in any analysis of the government as a political agent. After all, "[t]he threat of force plays a large

role in any type of rule" (219), as Reinhard Bendix states in his analysis of power preservation in monarchies. However, responsiveness allows conceiving of the government as an entity that is acted upon and has to adapt under the impact of that action, which is perhaps not a role in which the government is habitually experienced by most citizens.

Next to the concept of responsiveness, that of compliance is useful when it comes to describing the relations between elements in a political power structure. Compliance is furthermore a crucial component in understanding the conditions for one pivotal characteristic of democracies in most prescriptive outlines of this polity, namely the rule of law. While Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca is mainly concerned with Latin American governments' negotiations of the rule of law under autocratic regimes, he summarizes the theoretical, causal connection between the two phenomena of compliance and rule of law very aptly when he states that

> [t]he ideal behind the rule of law is that of universal compliance with the rules that define the political system and regulate its functioning. Even if nothing is external to society, a society that is well ordered in institutional terms is a society in which the rules are such that no one finds it advantageous to act contrary to them. (Sánchez-Cuenca 63)

The "universal compliance" referenced by Sánchez-Cuenca is a central point of concern in deliberations on rhizomatic panopticism and its implications. The field of tension that comes into existence as a result of the multi-directional vectors of the gazes emitted by the participating elements as well as the processes of becoming that they engender can be conceptualized very competently with the help of the term of "compliance" as specified by Sánchez-Cuenca. In such a system, compliance ceases to be a behavioral mode in which the elements participating in the system engage on a purely voluntary basis, being free to quit their compliance should they identify non-compliance to be more "advantageous." Much rather, the participating individual's implication into the system of gazes, which, although not rigid, can certainly be described as firm, effectuates processes of becoming in that very individual which prompt behaviors that are compliant with the desires of the fellow participants.

In this manner, the application of rhizomatic panopticism allows to conceive of the phenomenon of compliance as a continuation and intensification of the phenomenon of responsiveness. While responsiveness in its meaning as susceptibility to influence finds most frequent application in analyzing governmental behaviors in democratic systems, compliance encapsulates not only a much broader base of actors than just the government, but also the subsequent step following having been subjected to influence. Following this logic, responsiveness and compliance can be identified as largely metonymically linked, the former phenomenon being a precondition for the latter.

Closely associated with both, responsiveness and compliance in a system marked by rhizomatic panopticism is a core understanding of any normative model of democracy, namely that of accountability. This is also the concept that allows for a further discussion of differences between a system marked by rhizomatic panopticism as devised by Paine and Emerson on the one hand and the normative model of Athenian democracy on the other. While normative conceptions of Athenian democracy might be a good approximation to the system of rhizomatic panopticism in its democratic potentials as present in Paine and Emerson, it should not be considered a perfectly matching replication or model thereof. One of the most obvious points of divergence would be the safeguards for enforcing accountability, which were strongly developed in Athenian law during the democratic periods, but which are, as shall be shown, conceptualized rather more generally in rhizomatic panopticism and in Paine and Emerson. As Jon Elster illustrates on the basis of sources like Plato and speeches by contemporary politicians, mechanisms to safeguard accountability of officials and of the electorate often used the principle of “incapacitation” rather than that of “deterrence,” as for example in the case of ostracism (267). This principle of incapacitation, especially in its conceptual binary opposition to that of deterrence, runs counter to the working principle of panoptic effects on the individual agent, which is much more akin to deterrence, while not being congruent with the same.

Elster discusses five mechanisms of ensuring accountability in ancient Greece’s democracies, these being *dokimasia*, *enthynai*, *eisangelia*, *graphe paranomon*, and *apophasis* (cf. 262). These safeguards of accountability are, as in fact Elster postulates the very concept of accountability itself to imply at all times, operating “ex post” (254). While Elster is aware of the fact that “[i]n modern democracies, control is also exercised ex ante” (ibid.), he makes clear that “[i]n Athens, there was less scope for control ex ante” (ibid.).

The panoptic effect as described by Foucault should be conceived as operating ex ante rather than ex post, as it is the fostering of a specific expectation that is set to influence future behavior, rather than the imposition of a specific punishment for a particular past behavior, that enforces compliance with a set of norms in a panoptic environment. Hence, hints or references to specific mechanisms of ensuring accountability ex post are not abundant in either Paine or Emerson's conceptions of systems operating on the grounds of rhizomatic panopticism, in contrast to the political system of Athenian democracy. Rather than specific punitive institutions that reflect on the officials' performance and then castigate them for shortcomings or incapacitate them for wrongdoings, rhizomatic panopticism seems to assume the sufficiency of a clear communication of desires coupled with a constant surveillance under conditions of complete transparency to ensure a kind of compliance that would render either punishment or incapacitation unnecessary. Thus, a clear delineation between accountability and compliance may be difficult to establish with accuracy in a system of rhizomatic panopticism.

As Elster points out himself when suggesting a classification of types of accountability depending on their desirability by the officials to be held accountable, there is a distinct correspondence between accountability and transparency when the former is positively connoted by the officials (259). As Elster puts it paraphrasing the work of political scientist John Ferejohn,

> agents may have an interest in making it easier for the principal to observe their behavior, in order to get him to trust them with more resources. Hence we might expect the party most favorable to large government to prefer more-transparent (sic!) party rules. Independently of the substance of policy, a candidate might use his greater transparency as an argument with the voters, thus inducing other candidates to follow suit in a pooling equilibrium. (259)

In Elster's explanation, transparency is a consciously employed tool used to further the self-interested goals of the officials, or agents in this principal-agent conception of the relationship between voter and elected official. More specifically, officials establish their own transparency to increase trust and thereby to increase resource allocation, as one example. In rhizomatic panopticism, however, the characteristic of transparency is to be

regarded an exigency and core feature of the system rather than a favor granted by officials for personal gain. Transparency, to a large extent, defines every constituent element in a system conditioned by rhizomatic panopticism and calibrates itself also as a function of the constant visual contact between the elements participating in the system. As surveillance is thus postulated to constitute a ubiquitous and generally applied practice, the feature of transparency further establishes itself as a core characteristic of all elements participating in a rhizomatically panoptic space. Arguably, transparency can thus also be conceived as an ex ante mechanism to execute control, and thereby an ex ante mechanism of safeguarding accountability. Again, the contrast to the Athenian model of democracy with its focus on ex post mechanisms of ensuring accountability grows apparent.

Interestingly, theories that stipulated the representatives' accountability as a central factor of representation were not the only ones to be encountered in England during the given period, while they were certainly the most prevalent. In this context, Reid quotes George Pitt, 1st Baron Rivers of Stratfieldsaye who suggested that the gradient of accountability might well be reversed between the representatives and the represented. As Reid states,

> Rivers even had the fantastic idea that it was the elector and not the representative who might be accountable. At least he said that the elector "is answerable for the choice of his representative to the whole community, from the King to the child of the peasant in the cradle," but because of the doctrine of universal representation it was absurd to think of the representative "rendering account solely to his constituents." Perhaps Rivers did not mean this too seriously, but we can never be certain of eighteenth-century constitutional epicures. Then, too, Horace Walpole thought Rivers "half-mad." (Reid 81, 82)

The slightly humorous and overall unfavorable appraisal of Rivers' suggestion to hold the represented accountable for their choices might have been different and less dismissive were one to consider the suggestion quoted from a vantage point that took the principle of reciprocity into account. Apparently, Rivers did not have it in mind to absolve one of the two parties from the responsibility of answering for decisions and actions, but to postulate that responsibilities of the two parties were in fact similar. While Reid seems to regard this

suggestion as outlandish and worthy of slight ridicule, Rivers' words can also be read to foreground a feature that is often underrepresented in democracy, namely the agency of the elector and the far-reaching implications of electors' decisions.

Clearly, the model Rivers had in mind did not apply the principle of reciprocity strictly in a sense that would comply with the provisions of rhizomatic panopticism as the accountability of both elements, the represented and the representative, does not oscillate between the two, inducing them to regard each other's wishes. Much rather, the postulation of "universal representation" that dominated English political thought at the historical moment in question here set the common good, or put differently the entire electorate and all of the other British subjects combined, as the focal point and reference for considerations of accountability. In that light, one could argue that as both the elector and the elected form part of that entirety of, as Rivers puts it, "the whole community," the oscillation of accountability eventually establishes itself between these two elements, as well, even though this establishment is of a rather theoretical nature and does not occur instantaneously given the parameters pointed to in Rivers' words.

The following section will elucidate how the presented normative features and models of a democratic polity were adopted and transformed in the national contexts of the Early Republic, France during the period of the Revolution of 1789, and once in the US during the Age of Jackson. The consideration of the features of democratic polities and their transmutations will be supplemented by a discussion of further contemporary conditions and events in the ambits of politics, society, and economy to better comprehend the relevance of the concepts of multiplicity, immediacy, equality, accountability, transparence, and reciprocity during the periods in which *The Age of Reason* and *Nature* were produced.

4. Historical Contexts

The present chapter provides a historical overview that focuses on the three distinct periods relevant to the productions of *The Age of Reason* and *Nature*, namely the Early Republic, the French Revolution, and Jacksonian Democracy. Rather than an exhaustive account amounting to what might be called a thick description in New Historicist terms, this chapter aims to complement the awareness of the sociopolitical issues and corresponding cultural narratives that impinged upon the production of both tracts and influenced their particular

expressions of matters pertaining to democratic outlines of polities. One interesting if incidental element connecting Paine's *The Age of Reason* and Emerson's *Nature* is the circumstance that both tracts were produced roughly half a decade after revolutions in France, the former after that of 1789, the latter after that of 1830. Of course, the impact of the French Revolution of 1789 is much more immediate on *The Age of Reason* since Paine wrote the text living in France in the early 1790s, responding to the policies of the Terror. The impact of the revolution of 1830 on Emerson is much less immediate, as Emerson resided in the US throughout the composition of *Nature* and referred in his tract to American landscapes and social question rather than European ones. Emerson's *Nature* is hence commonly read as a product of Jacksonian Democracy that echoes the imperatives of individualism and laizes-faire liberalism on its ideological level. This chapter aims to elucidate further and arguably more stringent historical connections between the production contexts of the tracts in question and it does so by focusing chiefly on the concepts and processes that define the described normative system of rhizomatic panopticism. In other words, it is mainly the rhizomatically panoptic features of the said national contexts during the specific historical periods and that form the major interest in this instance. For this reason, the following three sections concentrate on the negotiation of structural features such as centralization and heterogeneity, political representation and the transparence of power, its reciprocity and accountability, as well as sociopolitical hierarchies and the conception of the human body.

The Early Republic

This section retraces the relevant concepts and debates regarding the structural features of a potential, crystallizing polity during the era of the Early Republic. The perceptions and criticisms of the Articles of Confederation as the first instance of an American constitution extending its effect to all of the initial former colonies provides a background for the formulation of the implicit exigencies contemporaries demanded a new, more suitable polity to ideally represent. Yet before regarding the Early Republic in greater detail and focusing in particular on the political structures negotiated and instituted during that time period, one brief differentiation with regard to the underpinnings of American political theory of that era is in order. As elucidated in the previous chapter, mainly sources from Greek and Roman

antiquity as well as from Stuart England and Enlightenment France are credited with having facilitated the development of core structural features of modern-day democracies. Especially in the context of the United States of America, however, it would be an omission to fail to recognize the impact that Native American political associations, as they were witnessed by the colonists in the mid 18th century, exerted on the formation of the US polity. In this context, it is the Iroquois Confederation that receives most attention by historians of the US Constitution. Writing in 1996, Samuel B. Payne surveys this increasing specification in historicizing the development of the Articles of Confederation and the subsequent Constitution and states that "[i]n the last few years, the Iroquois influence thesis has shown signs of being accepted as the new orthodoxy in some quarters" (Payne 606).

According to that thesis, it is the French and Indian War that brought envoys of the colonies into negotiation with the Iroquois in their search for potential partnerships against the French, and while an alliance could not be established, some colonists started to view the association of the Iroquois as witnessed during the negotiations as an adequate template for the design of a constitution for the colonies (Lutz 59). Features like the intentional "looseness" and the "inherent weakness" of the established bonds between the colonies, facilitating their respective autonomies, are some characteristics said to have been inspired by the Iroquois (ibid. 67; cf. Payne 610, 611). While acknowledging this thesis and the nuance it brings to historicizing the Constitution, Payne is most weary of overstating the actual influence that the Iroquois could have brought to bear on the designs of the associations and legal documents of the colonists; directing his attention also at the more widely acknowledged sources of the Constitution, he offers the conclusion that

> [p]robably none of the foreign confederations – in contemporary Europe, ancient Greece, or Indian America – had much influence on the thinking of eighteenth-century Americans. To both Federalists and Antifederalists, by far the most important confederation was the one they were living in: the United States under the Articles of Confederation. (Payne 620)

In the historiography on the periods of the American Revolution and the first phases of the Early Republic, a multiplicity of centers of power before the adoption of the federalist system receives a rather negative evaluation. Edmund S. Morgan notes that, generally, the phase in which the Articles of Confederation were in effect, beginning in 1781 and ending

1789, “used to be considered a dark and doubtful time” by many historians (113). More often than not, the Articles of Confederation, which limited any centralized power and allowed the governments of individual states a fairly high degree of autonomy (Cogliano 103; Horsman 4), are criticized for weakening the becoming political entity of the United States by allowing for such a multiplicity of power centers. In their introductory work to political science, Bond and Smith iterate what seems to be the academic consensus regarding the shortcomings of the Constitution’s forebear: “The overarching weakness in the Articles of Confederation was the lack of centralized power adequate to govern a nation” (59). Jack Rakove, for example, notes that the perception of the said document as weak was also prevalent soon after its implementation, stating that “[n]o sooner did the Articles go into effect than Congress began considering major amendments” on account of its “perceived inadequacy” and “imbecility” (Rakove 45).

“Weakness” is also the quality that Francis D. Cogliano readily mentions in his appraisal of the said document, however applying it to the kind of administration that it allowed for; he states that “[t]he Articles of Confederation created a relatively weak federal government” (Cogliano 103). This absence of centralization and the concomitant “weakness” was exemplified by the fact that the Articles of Confederation curtailed the government’s authority to a highly circumscribed field. Bond and Smith summarize this field as “matters of war and peace that wartime experience indicated should be vested in the nation” (Bond, Smith 45). These matters consisted mainly of levying troops and engaging in diplomacy (ibid.), but excluded the supervision of trade or taxes in whatever form (ibid.). Ben Baack examines “the evolution of the financial powers of the national government” during the late 1770s, precisely when the Articles of Confederation were in effect (Baack 640). This phase also coincided with part of the Revolutionary War and thus rendered issues of raising taxes to fund war-related preparations especially pressing. After the first fights with British troops in April of 1775, Baack explains, Congress called the Continental army into being (640, 641). It thus “found itself in the rather unsettling position of having assumed national expenditure powers without having any independent source of revenue” (ibid. 641). In that situation, the urgent question was “would the colonial assemblies have granted Congress the power to tax” (ibid.). Referring back to the very cause of the war, Baack tentatively answers this question in the negative: “The experience of 10 years of protest against new British taxes

suggested that they would not" (ibid.). Instead of taxation, Congress had to resort to the printing of currency to cover the costs of war (ibid.).

The fact that the administration under the Articles of Confederation thus had "inherited a huge debt necessitated by the ongoing war, and a nearly worthless currency" (Cogliano 104) exacerbated the insubstantial role of the federal government before the ratification and implementation of the Constitution. While the government, consisting, as shall be elucidated further on, of only one chamber, was given the authority of calling on states to disburse a fraction of the taxes raised by them, it was not capable of enforcing the request effectively should states not comply with the request, which frequently happened (Bond, Smith 45). Tracing the continuities between the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution as well as historicizing the genesis of both, Donald S. Lutz explains that when it came to the drafting of the former document, "no argument for bicameralism was heeded. Most delegates to the Continental Congress were thinking defensively. They were too concerned with preserving state political power to take seriously arguments to make the national government effective, and therefore powerful" (Lutz 64).

The same principle applied with regard to military matters, as only the states had the authority to draft soldiers (Bond, Smith 45). Further illustrating the central government's lack of power was the provision that modifications to the Articles of Confederation could only have been put into effect had all states agreed on them unanimously (Bond, Smith 45; Fritz 138). As Bond and Smith summarize, "[l]acking the authority to make the states meet their obligations, and bereft of the power to tax or conscript individuals, the national government lacked the means to fulfill the basic governmental responsibilities entrusted to it" (Bond, Smith 45). Thus, it is this lack of a provision of what Carr et al. refer to as "actual administrative machinery of government at the national level" (35) in the Articles of Confederation that allow most historians to conclude that this first constitution was "seriously defective as an adequate constitutional basis for a system of national government in the United States" (ibid.)

Both, the contemporary American distrust towards multiplicity and decentralization as well as historians' negative evaluation thereof can be read as connected to the prevalent conviction in contemporary political theory that a society, if it set out to function well, needed to avoid faction and conflict. Many public figures of the Early Republic shared this very persuasion and insisted that the best functioning social and political culture was one

that relied heavily on the predominance of concord over conflict. As Thomas Clark points out regarding Benjamin Rush, the noted Early Republic politician and physician, his "model of a political order was the classical Republican principle that a society required harmony, i. e. that all its individual parts conform to each other" (Clark 65). This rather abstract notion elevated to an ideal of political principle stood in marked contrast to the actual structures of the communities which were marked by heterogeneity from the inception of colonization. It has to be kept in mind that, for example "[t]he colonies were each a collection of towns or counties rather than a single, undifferentiated entity" (Lutz 57), and that this structure persevered to some extent into the Early Republic as "the colonies, and later the states, tended to be built from the bottom up as a federation of local governments" (ibid. 58). Heterogeneity also marked the perception of the colonies in their socio-economic features and political interests when compared to each other. As Jack P. Greene points out, "[d]ifferences and animosities among the colonies appeared to be so deep that they became an important element in the calculations of both metropolitan officials and American resistance leaders during the controversies that preceded the Revolution" (Greene 19), making their unification into a homogenous political entity an unlikely contingency (ibid.). Among the colonial politicians and representatives, there was a stark unbelief "that any effective or lasting union among such heterogeneous components could ever turn out well" (ibid. 20). This situation of heterogeneity was further resonant with what Greene refers to as an "almost total absence of any sense of American national consciousness," which was prevalent well into the revolutionary period (22). The imperative towards unity and the complete negation of faction relevant in the political discourse of the Early Republic seem thus like a forceful rejection of the recent past so strongly marked by the very characteristics now perceived as a threat to consolidation and conformity.

According to Daniel J. Elazar, however, it might have been the refusal to identify with larger political entities that actually prompted the colonists to consent to unifying into one state, instead of maintaining the independence of every one of the individual states. As he puts it,

> [n]o doubt, one of the reasons why it was possible to convince a majority of Americans voting by states to abandon confederation for federation was because, even in the Revolutionary era, the states were not able to command a level of

> identification stronger than that of individual self-interest and the growing common perception that Americans were Americans, first and foremost (Elazar 3).

While Elazaer's last statement might seem to contradict Greene's conclusion regarding the lack of a unified national identity during the Revolutionary period, it also reads like a fairly commonplace formula that adds a celebratory tone to an otherwise very sober observation. This observation entails that the voting residents of the states were motivated first and foremost by their "individual self-interest."

This facet, however, did not only impact individuals, but was representative of states' behaviors during the Revolutionary War under the Articles of Confederation, as well. Keith Dougherty's empirical analysis of the state's contributions to the government under the Articles of Confederation seems to support the assumption that particular needs and interests usually superseded the concern for the welfare of the whole. Dougherty comes to the following conclusion:

> During the American Revolution, when patriotism was allegedly at its peak, state politicians appear to have been more responsive to their immediate interests and local threats than to the needs of the Union. In other words, there is more evidence that the states contributed to attain the private benefits of joint products, such as defeating nearby enemies or trading with local armies, than the common needs of the Union. (65, 66)

Dougherty thus attributes greater accuracy to the Federalists' evaluation of the reasons why states failed to support the government with the quantities of either money or soldiers necessary. According to this faction, as Dougherty reports, the respective states "had an incentive to free ride" (52), while Anti-Federalists usually correlated insufficient support with the state's insufficient means to render the support required by the government (ibid.). Thus, he closes with a statement that might also well apply to Elazar's observations: "Ironically, the force that bound the Union may have been the same self-interest that the Anti-Federalists believed would corrode democracy" (Dougherty 66). While this differentiation has great explanatory power for the occurrences prefacing the formation of the Union and ratification of the US Constitution, one must be aware of the potentials that

the emphasis on the eventual beneficence of private interest can exude when it comes to the invigoration of discourses of liberalism. Nonetheless, this nuance implies that rather than as a unification affirming unity and harmony, the conjunction of states into a federation was the result of the interplay of a variety and multiplicity of particularized goals.

The relationship towards increasing centralization and structural homogeneity was thus not unambiguously positive, as the considerable interest in ensuring the accountability of elected officials and government institutions show. Here, the concerns of the historians and commentators evaluating the Articles of Confederation as well as the state constitutions and the concerns of the legislators and constituents during the Revolutionary period and during the Early Republic seem to diverge immensely. As just discussed, the former group tends to identify, and to some extent lament, the lacking centralization of power as the weakening element of the Constitution's precursor, while the latter group seems to have found merit in this trait and its potential to prevent the abuse of power by too powerful a central government. Speaking of the respective constitutions drafted by the individual states before the implementation of the Constitution of the United States in 1789, Bond and Smith come to the conclusion that "[t]he central concern reflected in these constitutions was a distrust of centralized power" (Bond, Smith 46). In the same context, Greene refers the reader to the struggle against Britain and states that "[t]hese painful lessons gave rise to a profound mistrust of central power that was readily transferable from the British government to an American national government" (Greene 20). Greene also points to the influence of Montesquieu on the colonists' perception of different polities; they heeded and shared his partiality to models of "loose confederation" over "consolidated republics" (20). Thus, decentralization of power lay at the core of the first constitutions of the former colonies.

Likewise, Cogliano underlines the potentially positive aspect of the perceived weakness of the Articles of Confederation mentioned before, maintaining that "[t]o the extent the power was decentralized under the articles, they can be seen as a victory for those who favored a democratic republican model" (Cogliano 103). Endeavors to elicit major transformations in the document to fundamentally change the safeguarding of decentralization therein granted Cogliano attributes to "elitist republicans" (103), whose efforts finally emanated into "the creation of a stronger federal constitution and the triumph of an elitist republican model for the government of the United States" (ibid. 104).

The attitude toward the separation of powers, by the time in question already a mainstay of political theory as the previous chapter explains, was equally impacted by the concern for guaranteeing accountability and excluding the possibility of undue concentrations of power in one element of the polity. The clearly defined elements of a legislature in the form of the two houses, a judiciary in the form of the Supreme Court, and the executive in the form the presidency are commonly held to represent the American Constitution's main strength when comparing it to the previously operating Articles of Confederation. The Articles of Confederation designed the government's legislature to rely on only one chamber and did not define a clearly established and separated executive or judiciary (Bond, Smith 45). Edmund S. Morgan locates the reasons for relying on one chamber in the lack of a "titled aristocracy," a lack which according to some politicians obviated the need to include an "upper house" into the constitutional design (92). Comparing the Articles of Confederation to the Constitution, Lutz points out that

> [a]side from the narrower grant of power to the national Congress, and a unicameral legislature where each state had one vote, the Articles differed from the United States Constitution mainly in having a Committee of the States instead of a single executive – the Committee being comprised of one delegate from each state – and a court that was directly a creature of the Congress. (Lutz 67)

He goes on to state that the similarities between the Articles of Confederation and the respective constitutions of the states are most striking when focusing on the weakly developed concept of the separation of powers into three distinct and reasonably powerful branches (ibid.).

Provisions regarding the election of officials were also made to serve the end of ensuring accountability in the context of a peculiar absence of a separation of powers before the Constitution came into effect. Both the Articles of Confederation and the states' constitutions, generally, relied on a strong legislature while keeping both the executive and the judiciary fairly disempowered and dependent on the legislatures (Bond, Smith 45). This dependence asserted itself in the provision by which the legislature appointed the officials to hold positions in the other two branches (ibid.). The majority of the states also restricted time in office for members of the legislature to one year and impeded the re-election of

officials via the mechanism of "forced rotation" (ibid.). The Articles of Confederation, resonating with such stipulations of rotation, curtailed officials' time of service, as well, mandating that "no delegate could serve more than three one-year terms over any six-year period, which in practice usually meant that the average delegate served for three years and then was off for three years. This, and the prohibition on multiple office-holding, were common provisions in state constitutions" (Lutz 65). Bond and Smith point out that especially the "[r]ecall provisions and the dominance of legislatures, for example, reinforced majority rule by giving the people frequent opportunities to hold their representatives accountable" (45). These features render explicit that ascertaining officials' accountability to their electorates was a major priority in designing the first state constitutions and the Articles of Confederation.

The principle of reciprocity and the concern for its application between the governed and those in power seems to have presented a defining feature for the shaping of the American polity. This principle and its egalitarian implications are often attributed to the specific social structure that formed in the colonies as a result of a generalized impression of being removed from the tight, oppressive supervision of a superior, reinforced by the geographic structure of the settler colonies. As Robert H. Wiebe puts it in his 1995 study of American democracy titled *Self-Rule*, "[c]olonial America's scattered population, skeletal government, competitive Protestantism, and scant military presence were poor material for building hierarchies in the first place" (Wiebe 17). As Wiebe goes on to explain, what might be interpreted as a relative absence of a tightly-knit and overarching fabric of strict authority from the every-day experience of American colonists impacted their perception of and compliance with European models of chains of command and vectors of obedience:

> Indicatively, when British officers tried to impose their version of hard, clear military discipline on the Massachusetts and Virginia militia during the 1750s, the colonists' assumptions of a looser, more reciprocal arrangement between superior and inferior frustrated them. (Wiebe 17)

Wiebe's conclusion regarding American colonists' expectation of a "reciprocal arrangement" between those invested with power and those demanded to obey that power is striking, for reciprocity of power is a core constituent of a considerable number of normative democratic

models. On account of this apparent discursive congruence between descriptions of American colonial and revolutionary expectations regarding power relations on the one hand and outlines of normative models of democracy on the other, the question of whether this congruence has been established with some degree of deliberation seems warranted. To put differently, historians and political scientists concerned with the periods of colonial and Revolutionary America seem inclined to apply vocabularies associated with the description of democratic systems of government to the conditions and relations prevalent or expected during the period in question. This inclination might be expressive of an agreement with conceptions of the US as the first manifestation of a truly democratic system of government in Western modernity, as hegemonic national narratives would suggest. The same principle seems to apply to common description of American colonists' and drafters' of state constitutions interest in preserving a high degree of decentralization, which also is strongly associated with democratic systems of government.

Events in the realm of economics further impacted the favorable disposition toward decentralization. As mentioned, the War of Independence had induced the colonies to accrue considerable debt during the 1770s. Beginning in 1781, perhaps not incidentally the year in which the Articles of Confederation came into effect and in which the Bank of North America, the first bank in the Early Republic, was initiated by Robert Morris (Gilje 163), an economic depression defined the decade after the Revolutionary War had ended (Bond, Smith 46). As Cogliano depicts the situation, the individual states and the federal government had to undertake the resolution of economic difficulties that were much alike, doing so in rather similar ways, namely by endeavoring to pay their respective war debts with "paper money and promissory notes," which exacerbated the situation further, leading to "runaway inflation and rapidly rising prices" in the early 1780s (104). All the while, the individual states kept their individual coinages and notes, thereby sabotaging any concerted effort to stabilize the economic commotion on a supra-state level, at the same time as the government continued to do the same (Cogliano 104; Gilje 163). As Paul A. Gilje points out in his brief overview of the development of capitalism in the Early Republic, only the next decade and the coming into effect of the US Constitution that redefined monetary policy helped to bring the problem of inflation under control (163).

Another important feature of the American economy during the Early Republic with immense potential political ramifications was the formation of an American working class

(Kerber 190). As Linda K. Kerber points out, especially American textile production had to rely on child and female labor in order to maintain its production (188-190). This circumstance is often interpreted as "an index of American prosperity" (ibid. 190) as it is indicative of a short supply of labor in the face of great productivity. While Kerber acknowledges this reading of working arrangements exploiting child labor, she is very mindful of the less celebratory meaning of this phenomenon, namely that there were plenty of "men who *were* common laborers, and whose dollar a day salary, which made them the best paid common laborers in the West, did not provide for a family sufficiently so that it did not have to send its children into the mills" (ibid.; emphasis in the original). As Kerber goes on to clarify, American working and living conditions were generally regarded as superior to those of Europe, but social mobility was still far from achievable for most workers, and the toil they engaged in to secure their livelihoods was considerable (191).

The expansion of the social stratum of the working men and women as well as of the urban poor had serious implications, as Kerber continues to note, for the Early Republic's conception of political rights and citizenship. Veritable political autonomy and self-determination was conceived, especially in Jefferson's thought, to be accessible only to the individual who did not have to rely on the provider of an employment for the securing of a livelihood (ibid. 185, 186). In this context, Gordon S. Wood describes a rather interesting feature of the Early Republic in his 1996 essay entitled "The Enemy is US: Democratic Capitalism in the Early Republic," namely the general lack of respect for and prestige of the working population, such as farmers, manufacturers, and handymen, who were all subsumed under the category of "laborers" (301). Referring to America's best-known founding father anecdotally in this context, Wood ascertains that "[t]his is why Franklin made so much of his retirement from his printing business at the age of 42: only then could he become a full-fledged gentleman and devote himself to science and public service" (300). Franklin's pride, as Wood points out previously, is conditioned by a

> two-thousand-year-old prejudice against manual labor, a prejudice that made it very difficult for artisans or mechanics, however rich and respectable, to claim genteel status as long as they continued to work for a living with their hands, or even to run a business that involved employees working with their hands. (Wood, "The Enemy" 300)

In this context of labor relations in the Early Republic, the focus also has to encompass slavery and its impact on that era. In his analysis of labor legislation as it defined the relationships between "masters and servants" and was active during the period of the Early Republic, Jeffrey S. Kahana refers to St. George Tucker, an influential legal scholar from Virginia, who at the very beginning of the 19th century came to the conclusion that "chattel slavery, not recognized in English common law, was the principle source of unfreedom endorsed by early American law and one that overrode all other forms of servitude" (40, 41). Not only was slavery the most impactful form of servitude in the Early Republic, slave labor also accounted for the largest part of "productive workers" and general "productivity" (Aptheker 207). The issue of slavery and its determination of the Early Republic's economic productivity also fit into a larger context of political exclusion during that era. Paying attention to the political status of the enslaved Black population, but also to that of "white servants, women, minors, and propertyless white males," Linda Grant DePauw brings to her readers' attention that

> [h]ad Lockean dicta been applied to all the human beings in British North America on the eve of the Revolution, and had all been permitted to enjoy the natural and legal rights of freemen, it would have been necessary to alter the status of more than 85 per cent of the population. In law and in fact no more than 15 per cent of the Revolutionary generation was free to enjoy life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness unhampered by any restraints except those to which they had given their consent. (153)

The Revolution, it follows, did not fundamentally change the social stratifications in the formerly colonial society of the United States during the period of the Early Republic, in spite of the apparent insistence on reciprocal power relations and a more egalitarian culture. Writing about the revolutionary generation, Morgan notes that "[t]hough they had committed themselves to the principle of human equality, most of them applied it only in equating themselves with Englishmen," remaining fairly uncritical to the socioeconomic disparities that ruled relationships within their own communities (88). Certainly, changes in behaviors between different socioeconomic status groups and classes that occurred in the Revolutionary years and during the Early Republic need to be acknowledged – as they often

are by historians. Kerber, for example, writes that this particular transformation of comportment was very noticeable and a defining feature of the period in question, particularly to the chagrin of Federalists. As she puts it,

> [a]ll around them, the Federalists of the Old Republic saw familiar social habits decaying. The most obvious sign of changing social balances was the decline of deferential behavior. After the social dislocations of the 1770's and 1780's fewer people had a pedigree of gentility and fewer still were willing to recognize such pedigrees where they existed. Surely there had always been in America egalitarians who refused to defer to their social superiors: the Quakers, for example, or the unchurched men and women who had accompanied John Winthrop to Boston and had made it so difficult for him and his associates to establish the tightly structured community of which they had dreamed. The egalitarian current of the Revolutionary era turned exceptions to the rule into harbingers or a trend; by the first decade of the nineteenth century, gentlefolk all over the nation, except perhaps in the South, were complaining that they were treated with far less respect and awe than they were accustomed to. (Kerber 178, 179)

What is particularly striking about Kerber's account in this instance is the notion of a kind of anti-egalitarian tradition in America that had been present since colonial times and proliferated mainly in the sphere and through the practices of religious worship. The Revolution and the establishment of the Republic finally propelled those tendencies into the mainstream and elevated them to the cultural norm, as the valorization of the citizen without hereditary social or economic privileges proceeded. Again, the stress seems to be on the increased demand for reciprocal relations that disregard rigid structures of hereditary privilege and the social customs associated with them. Instead of a traditional, inflexible configuration of society, whose deep-rooted inequalities were supposed to be marked and affirmed by concomitant gestures and rituals, a flattening of hierarchies seemed to be the order of the day after the Revolution. As other historians suggest, these changes were not only noticeable to the American "gentlefolk" and Federalist sympathizers who lamented the apparent decrease of their own privileges. As Wiebe notes, "[i]t became commonplace for Europeans to note the bluntness, the lack of a deferential language, among America's

common folk, especially in the coastal towns" (18). These observations on the part of European visitors surely hinted at the adoption of a rather more egalitarian culture in every-day affairs during the years of the Early Republic.

Yet Wiebe also points out that the perceived rejection of traditional hierarchies and social structures often turned out to be a discursive rather than a truly material phenomenon engendering palpable alterations in the distribution of power and resources. The adoption of an egalitarian tone did not herald the disappearance of traditional social and economic power structures. As Wiebe describes this phenomenon, "those American hierarchies were as resilient as they were soft. […] Who deferred to whom in 1800 determined matters ranging from the organization of political parties to the predictions of which citizens would make it to heaven and which would not" (18). In this context, Wiebe's further remarks concerning American democracy in the early 19th century provide a poignant summary of the exclusionary mechanisms that were still in place to retain the structure of privilege distribution largely intact, allowing for only minor changes. He suggests that "[a]s its public life flourished, democracy changed the relations between public and private. […] In both cases, that is to say, white men brought a new consciousness to denying certain people a public existence" (ibid. 16). In a turn to greater specificity regarding the exclusionary mechanisms alluded to, Wiebe offers the following enumerative account of the preservation of traditional hierarchies in the Early Republic:

> At the end of the century, clusters of local notables still dominated government, a wealthy few still monopolized its economic favors, small strata still controlled the learned professions, and gentlemen officers still recruited their own commands, much as elites in these hierarchies had a quarter century before. In 1802 when Tom Paine returned after a long absence to the United States, he slipped into isolation, a revolutionary out of time. (Wiebe 18)

The depiction of Thomas Paine as a figure whose ideals regarding America's revolutionary promise and its potential of veritably dismantling traditional gradients of power based on some forms of hereditary privilege adds emphasis to Wiebe's depiction of structural continuities in the realms of politics, economy, commerce, and the military. It also hints at

the reasons of the immensity of the disapproval that Paine had to face upon his return from his sojourn in France and upon the publication of the texts which he wrote there.

Especially *The Age of Reason* has been attacked as a work promulgating atheism, wherefore, as the academic consensus suggests, it has been repudiated by both contemporary and subsequent readers. His clear and unmistakable declaration at the very beginning of the tract that states his firm belief in a deity and his hope regarding the immortality of the soul (Paine, *The Age* 666) did not suffice to disestablish this association. Paine's "isolation" as well as the general hostility with which American public figures met him upon his return is suggested to have been cause by that very reading of *The Age of Reason* as disrespectful toward religion and calling for a departure from religious sentiments of any kind. What is more, the fact that Deism by the time of the writing and publication of *The Age of Reason* was by no means a belief system popular with the majority of Americans, as the next chapter will elucidate, warrants this relation of Paine's fall from grace and his perceived association with atheism. Commenting on Paine's fall, Kerry S. Walters states:

> As long as he contented himself with polemical defenses of American independence and the right to political self-determination, he was the darling of the young Republic. But the moment he stepped over the line of orthodox respectability in religious matters, the same people who earlier had applauded him as a noble patriot excoriated him as a "lilly-livered sinical rougue," "a drunken atheist," a "detested reptile." (209)

Clearly, Paine's attack on established Christianity and its doctrines as well as on its central text could have been perceived easily as a disparagement of other traditional and established social, cultural, political, and economic institutions that operated on the basis of similar mechanisms of power preservation as the church. In other words, the institution of the Christian church was made to stand vicariously for other institutions, organizations, and structures keen on preserving and expanding their influence while thwarting any changes to the status quo that might put this mission into peril. Paine's revolutionary credentials and readiness to indict and dismantle existing power relations based on arbitrary privilege deemed unjust in his writings were useful during a time when they could be directed against a well-defined enemy and put to use serving the consolidation of the colonies into a more

unified political entity. The Revolutionary War was such a time and the British monarchy with its military presence in the colonies was such an enemy. That phase over, Paine's ideas had a greater potential to question and disrupt rather than to unify and consolidate the social, political, and economic organization of the Early Republic, which arranged itself along the lines of formerly maligned and attacked formations of power.

In other words, Paine's democratic, revolutionary, and Deist discourses lost their usefulness to a society that was content with having disposed of British rule, but was not intent on the conflict a thoroughgoing renegotiation of power and hierarchies would have implied. Hence, he also lost his appeal to the American public as a writer and thinker championing revolution and democratization. Herein might lie a first answer to the peripheral question asked at the outset of the present thesis, namely why the considerable conceptual similarity between Paine's *The Age of Reason* and Emerson's *Nature* failed to produce similar receptions of both works by contemporary audiences. The fact that Emerson's *Nature* came into being after Andrew Jackson's term in office had transformed political discourse to privilege change, mobility, and anti-elitism as well as an ostentatious effort at democratization certainly improved the perception of Emerson's text. Paine, on the other hand, wrote at a time in which the consolidation of power structures was formulated as the political imperative. Hence, his ideas seemed as a destabilizing and potentially dangerous factor, not to be approved of or divulgated.

What did however coincide between Paine and some prevalent political views of the Early Republic was the importance of the human body when it came to conceptualizing citizenship. The physical, material human body was becoming increasingly important for the delineation of the individual citizen and the specific virtues implied by the status of citizenship. The centrality of the human body was especially emphasized by Republican, rather than Federalist, writers. This new emphasis on the body of the individual human being was ostensibly used in order to engage the notion of hereditary privilege. Antifederalist thinkers endeavored to transform the perception of those privileges that justified bestowing the additional privilege of citizenship onto the individual. In many ways, the Republicans professed to repudiate the continuation of an insistence on hereditary elite status, for which the Federalists are until today recognized to have stood. As Lutz points out, this the Antifederalists, as their name implies, are nowadays defined chiefly in opposition to Federalists (55) in spite of offering more than mere negation, for "these Antifederalists were

working from a coherent, positive view of politics that stressed liberty, popular sovereignty, majority rule, deliberative processes, localism, and a whole host of ideas and commitments central to what we would recognize as American political theory" (Lutz 55).

The human body and its representation functioned as a site in which these chiefly democratic values could be explained and justified against the backdrop of an elitist culture. In this vein, the speech delivered by editor and Congressman Matthew Lyon in 1797 constructs the Federalist ideology as fundamentally supportive of hereditary privilege when it comes to distributing political power and social influence. Of particular interest is Lyon's justification of his own claim of being "in one sense well-born" (in Adams 26), which differs greatly from the practice of the tracing of prestigious lineages; of this, he mockingly accuses representatives of the Federalist faction. Establishing a counter-example to elitist notions of being "well-born," Lyon writes:

> I have, indeed, some pretensions to what I consider to be founded on a much better basis – I am indeed in one sense well-born – I was well born of a stout, hearty, healthy woman, and sprung from the loins of a rigorous healthy man. This is our best title to be called well-born; and where there are simple manners and probity, I know of no pretensions whatever that can go higher. (in Adams 26)

Lyon constructs a notion of hereditary privilege that does not focus on the handing down of political power and prerogatives, but rather on having able-bodied parents, and by continuity of argument, on the state of being able-bodied himself, as a citizen. In Lyon's words, there is a clear connection between the individual's body, now defined as "well-born," and physical, sensual pleasure. He achieves this association of sensuality and pleasure on the one hand and projected socio-political privilege on the other by a very clear reference to the sexual act, albeit one whose reproductive quality is highlighted above all of its other potential aspects. The pleasurable element of the production of the potential citizen's body finds a most tangible translation into the emphatic alliteration of "hearty" and "healthy" in describing the mother and the repetition of the latter adjective in describing the father. The ardent formulation of "sprung from the loins" for the act of conception adds a rather dynamic and energetic note to the invoked act of reproductive sexuality. It thus also inserts

itself well into the image of an individual citizen rejoicing in his bodily vigor and proud health.

Of course, Lyon's juxtaposition of the Federalist and the Republican concepts of being "well-born" do not structurally contradict each other significantly, and neither of them seems to uphold a truly meritocratic logic of power allocation and citizenship. Rather than deconstructing or altogether thwarting the principle of hereditary privilege, Lyon formulates a counter-discourse in which he ties the normative type of hereditary privilege to physical vigor rather than lineage. The focus on the body, however, at least expands the availability of claiming that privilege. Nevertheless, the forceful exclusions on the basis of otherness from that constructed ideal of bodily vigor were still intact, especially as it was defined in most particular and exclusive terms that upheld discriminations on the basis of gender, race, and ability. The limitations of the partial expansion of the right to citizenship to universal male suffrage in the course of the following decades remained infamously rigid and durable as the presented connection of the able body and political privilege still worked on the grounds of the logic of vast exclusion. Lyon's normative, able, politically enfranchised body is white, male, and the offspring of a white, boastfully able-bodied heterosexual relation. Bodies that did not fall within this particular normative paradigm were indeed not vested with the privilege of political power in the form of participation. Women, the enslaved, Blacks, American Indians, to name the largest groups, were not granted representation in the said normative paradigm, thus constituting the other against which this new principle of privilege would define itself.

That the Early Republic's model of an ideal citizen was based on the grounds of a very specific construction of masculinity has been pointed out repeatedly. In his seminal *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, Forrest McDonald states very clearly that the much discussed concept of public virtue, which was of central importance to political debates during the period in question, circled exclusively around an image of the male citizen that presented an amalgam of traits taken from sources of Greek and Roman antiquity on the one hand and characteristics commonly associated with Protestantism on the other. He thus writes that "[p]ublic virtue entailed firmness, courage, endurance, industry, frugal living, strength, and above all, unremitting devotion to the weal of the public's corporate self, the community of virtuous men" (McDonald 70). The same ideals taken from antiquity, especially the Roman cultural sphere, were set to define the character and aesthetics surrounding offices and the

presidency. As Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick describe Adams and the politicians at the end of the 18th century deciding on the new protocol concerning terms of address and honorifics for office holders,

> [w]hat had governed just about everyone was a principle which gave a strong accent to the ideology of the Revolution: the austere simplicity of the Roman Republic. The imagery of the Latin classics had penetrated their lives, words, thoughts, and acts in endless ways ever since they could remember. The almanacs of the day, with lines from Horace, Virgil, and Ovid, had sung the praises of virtuous husbandry. The chief propagandists of the Revolution had been classical scholars, and had signed their tracts with classical pseudonyms. The non-importation agreements had been supported by the symbolism of Roman frugality and abstinence. The entire literature of the Revolution was permeated with the imagery of republican Rome menaced by the approaching shadow of the Caesars […] (Elkins, McKitrick 48)

Interestingly, the political rationale of framing the refusal to consume imported goods as a performance of masculinity marking a virtuous citizen was also used by the advocates of maintaining the citizenry armed after the Revolutionary War, as Robert E. Shalhope gives to understand. Echoing such advocates, Shalhope illustrates that disarmament was associated with a "loss of virility and virtue" (131), indicative of "[a]n increasingly luxury-loving people" who "ceased to arm themselves and voluntarily abdicated their martial responsibilities to professionals" (ibid.). Again, the use of an association of the concepts of "virility," martiality, austerity, and responsibility to construct a normative model of the citizen becomes visible. This construction operates on almost stereotypically masculinist grounds and foregrounds the decidedly masculine, "virile," and able corporeality of the normative citizen, which enables him to civic-minded belligerence when the circumstances require it.

While the sense of sight, which is of importance for the later discussion, is not directly referenced in the passage quoted from Lyon's conception of body and privilege, it is present on a more indirect level. The categorical case for an able body that exemplifies normative notions of health seems to naturally imply that such a body, and therefore such a citizen, would exhibit the capacity to exercise vision. Ability as constructed by Lyon, and as it

remains active in various hegemonic logics, presupposes sightedness. Another important implicit association of citizenship and sightedness occurs via the conduit of masculinity. Masculinity as a category equally implies sightedness in its hegemonic construction. The affiliation between hegemonic masculinity and the exercise of the gaze has become very nearly a commonplace notion in disciplines such as film studies, other branches of media studies, and also in literary studies.

The Early Republic's discourse around the individual human body and the conception of citizenship also had traits specifically relevant to a distinctly modern and increasingly capitalist society. After all, capitalism started to impact the Early Republic from its very inception, as Gilje asserts giving this phase the predicate of being "a crucial, if not *the* crucial, period in the development of that trademark characteristic of American society and economy" (cf. 160; emphasis in the original). Gilje ascribes so much importance to the Early Republic because it was this period that formed capitalism's most distinct features such as "a flexible currency, banking, corporations, transportation systems, industrialization, and pervasive consumerism" into what he calls "a recognizable shape" (162). In this context of an increasing impact of capitalist structures on the individual, Thomas Clark's analysis of Benjamin Rush's political thought and the importance of a quasi medical understanding of political and social order as fundamentally based on the disciplines in which individual bodies engage can be helpful in order to better comprehend this connection. Speaking of Rush's endeavors concerning the promotion of temperance, Clark writes that according to the physician and many of his contemporaries

> the destiny of the Republican body politic was inescapably bound up with that of the individual citizen's body and its conditioning to not only proper habits of drinking, but of eating, reading, watching plays, performing work, and being educated – in effect, culture in its totality. Not even in 1968 was the personal more political. (Clark 62)

This statement is interesting on account of several reasons: On the one hand, Clark restates the increasing, conscious implication of the human body into the conception of citizenship as the foundation of the polity to be had. On the other, he presents an engaging application of Foucauldian vocabularies and concepts to various aspects of the Early Republic, showing the

explanatory power that this French Poststructuralist can develop when harnessed to face the historical phase at hand.

Interestingly, the French Revolution played an important part in the creation of the nation-building narrative of the Early Republic. The political and socio-cultural connections between the Early Republic and the France after the Revolution of 1789 are therefore anything but hard to establish. A positive reaction to the French Revolution transcended all social and economic strata in the Early Republic, who projected their respective and ultimately diverse and diverging goals on the event and its potential symbolic meanings and implications (Davis 737). Davis ties American interest in French affairs during the period of the French Revolution to the alliance of both countries during the American War of Independence, which had transformed the enemy as known from the French and Indian Wars into a friend whose adherence to absolute monarchy and Catholicism Americans viewed with some concern (ibid. 739). As Davis puts it after mentioning the honouring of a Catholic service by both American and French troops when the battle of Yorktown had been successfully finished, “Americans’ gratitude to France, even when coupled with the profound Anglophobia generated by the Revolutionary War, could not disguise a sense of unease and guilt over being allied with a traditional foe and potent symbol of absolutist rule” (ibid.). He concludes that “the United States had a compelling ideological interest in seeing France transformed” (ibid.).

However, the aforementioned preserved hierarchies and enforced exclusions structuring the society of the Early Republic did not allow this interest in the French Revolution to remain unambiguously positive and sincere. American reluctance to embrace the implications of the French Revolution in their entirety, as for example the valorization of violence as a political tool, was to some degree accounted for by American reliance on slave labor and the concomitant refusal to validate violent uprisings as a legitimate form of fighting injustice and inequality (Davis 744). Wiebe acknowledges the importance of the French Revolution for the social developments in the United States, stating in his analysis of the supposed prevalence of egalitarianism in the societies of the American colonies and the Early Republic that “what radicalism the American, then the French Revolution let loose did no structural damage to America’s loose, adaptable hierarchy” (Wiebe 18). Davis even recognizes some uses to which a conscious positioning toward the French Revolution could be put in American; he puts it most tersely when he notes that in the Early Republic,

"francophilia seemed for a time to be a safe and even providential means for representatives of some elites to show they were not really an elite but men of the people, a game Americans have been playing with themselves ever since" (Davis 737).

The reception of the French Revolution in the Early Republic has not only served as a discursive site for the positioning and self-fashioning of elites; it has also effectuated a significant transformation in the evaluation of the term and concept of "democracy" itself. Seth Cotlar confirms in his essay entitled "Languages of Democracy in America from the Revolution to the Election of 1800" that the term "democracy" lacked the positive appeal with which it is imbued today throughout the revolutionary period – the term did not feature, as Cotlar rushes to point out in the very first sentence of his essay, in Paine's Common Sense, but "surfaced occasionally in the debates over the Constitution in 1787-8, but usually with a negative connotation" (13). The early 1790s, however, marked a decided shift in this term's connotation, as the French Revolution helped to propel the concept "from the fringes of American public discourse into the centre – from a word used most frequently as a term of abuse in 1776 (and even 1787) to a term emblazoned upon the public banners of a successful, nationally coordinated political party" (ibid.). With this transatlantic interest in the French Revolution in mind, I proceed with an overview of the revolutionary period in France.

The French Revolution

To further elaborate on the interest in each other that connected the US and France at the end of the 18th century, one can note that, interestingly, it was France's intervention in the American Revolution that facilitated certain economic conditions which then helped to provoke its own. As Gwynne Lewis points out in *The French Revolution: Rethinking the Debate*, France behaved rather extravagantly for a European monarchy in the latter half of the 18th century: Describing other European monarchies' endeavors to hold on to power in an impending imperialist struggle, Lewis notes that "[m]eanwhile, here was France, an absolutist monarchy, helping to create a republic in America! Her domestic and her foreign policies were running on completely different tracks" (21). The exorbitant expenses of "over a billion *livres*" (ibid.) justify viewing the partiality in the cause of the American Revolution as "a long-term disaster for France" (ibid.) according to Lewis. Attempts to collect the needed

revenue by increasing the taxation of land, which met with the resistance of landowners in local parliaments, antagonized "the privileged orders" (Lewis 22) and destabilized the monarchy's position of power (ibid.). Coupled with the invigoration of the press, as Lewis continues to explain, an "economic recession and harvest failure transformed a political crisis into a political and social revolution" (Lewis 23).

And not unlike in America, the Revolution did not effect dramatic sociopolitical changes right away. When Paine first arrived in Paris in 1787 (Philps 39), two years before the most illustrious and mythopoetic revolutionary events chief amongst which counts the Storming of the Bastille, the Revolution was not at all meant to be revolutionary – in many ways, the essential preservation of hitherto existing social structures was among the main expectations of the movements that came to be the preparatory forces of the transformations to follow in the 1790s. In other words it may well be said that contrary to the common, widespread perception, the French Revolution did not begin to impend as a sociopolitical project aiming at a major rearrangement of French society and its power structures (cf. Reichardt 186). Isser Woloch describes the conditions in the years leading up to the revolution as already marked by discontents severe enough to lead to considerable criticism of absolutist monarchy prior to the Revolution proper of 1789 (cf. 22). However, none of these confrontations implied, according to Woloch, a disagreement with the status quo as fundamental as to warrant significant worry regarding a radical and far-reaching alteration of the established system. Neither 1787's economic difficulties, nor the monarchy's neglectful treatment of the grievances presented by the Estates General, nor indeed the abounding critical leaflets published during that time sufficed to induce certainty of change and of a definitive departure from the ways of the past (ibid.).

Parts of the aristocracy and the *haute bourgeoisie*, as the major plaintiffs against the absolutist monarchy in the revolutionary process, were, for example, not at all willing to abolish the monarchical rule altogether in favor of a democratic structure. In a similar vein, Albert Soboul evaluates the French aristocracy as "[s]ocially privileged, but politically diminished" and nonetheless interested in the transformation of the absolutist into a "*tempered* monarchy" (25; emphasis in the original). Even Thomas Jefferson, by the time of the revolutionary events holding a diplomatic post in France (Dauer 47), is on record as having advocated to change the system "gradually, adopting a limited monarchy for the time being" (ibid.). One indicator of this fundamentally conciliatory disposition of the estates that

admonished the monarchy to undertake reforms is the wording of the famous *cahiers de doléances* that were issued in the late 1780s. As Susanne Lachenicht states, the *cahiers de doléances* were indicative of the importance of the king, who even in these accounts of complaints and grievances was often represented as above reproach and as a source about to grant the plaintiffs and authors of the *cahiers* the requested rights (cf. 31, 32). Lewis takes this view of the presumed revolutionary leaders even further when writing about the later stages of the process during the early 1790s before the king's execution:

> Indeed, although it is something of an exaggeration, one could say that the main problem confronting the deputies was how to *end* the Revolution rather than how to propel it towards more radical goals. The main objective, after all, was not the destruction of the monarchy in favour of popular democracy, but the transformation of the outmoded institutions associated with absolute monarchy into a "republican" form of government propped up by property-owning shareholders with the king as Managing Director. (Lewis 27; emphasis in the original)

This means that the basic relations of wealth and power distribution were to remain virtually unchanged, while only the distribution of political power in the form of rights and prerogatives was to be altered in support of the propertied and landed classes. What does appear as striking is the conceptual reimaging of the monarch's role, or rather a more explicit articulation of what had been demanded of him all along, namely a clear positioning on the side of the interests of the propertied classes. Such a mode of expectation, marked by the will to maintain a formal continuity of governmental structures while moderately transforming the allocation of some political rights, determined the phase of the constitutional monarchy until the deposition and eventual execution of the king.

In this context, the institution of the *Assemblée Nationale* can at least to some extent be seen as a first major shift in favor of implementing the notion of popular sovereignty as the operative principle of legislating processes, replacing one narrative determining political organization with another. In this vein, Isser Woloch locates the start of the actual Revolution on June 17, 1789, which marked the foundation of the National Assembly by Third-Estate deputies. The particular wording he uses in explaining this process is indicative of various problematic aspects of the concept and practice of representation in the context

of a radical conceptual change regarding the evaluation of the center or emanation of political power. As Woloch puts it in *The New Regime*:

> But when the frustrated deputies proclaimed the existence of the National Assembly in June, France truly embarked on a revolutionary course. In their juridical revolution-from-above, the deputies replaced the myth of divine right monarchy with the more complex fiction of popular sovereignty, and immediately appropriated that sovereignty by vesting it in themselves as the legitimate representatives of the people. Moreover, within weeks they further declared themselves to be a "Constituent Assembly" with the power to draft and promulgate France's first written constitution, wresting that power from an astonished monarchy. (22)

Here, Woloch summarizes some of the conceptual difficulties associated with the transition from the monarch as the fountain of power to the people as the sovereign. This change Woloch terms to be a transition from a "myth" to a "fiction." The obvious point to state here is that both, myths and fictions, have an uncertain and precarious relation to material reality, the former of the two being perceived as older or handed down from previous generations. Woloch's subsequent explanation of the complexities of the concept of representation and its application, supposedly contiguous with the notion of popular sovereignty, allow a twofold reading of the term "fiction." On the one hand, naming "popular sovereignty" a "more complex fiction" he seems to emphasize the fact that any conceptual construction in the realm of politics is first and foremost a narrative construction, not meant to mirror factual reality or material conditions. This formulation should make the reader aware of the ideal or normative character of political concepts, which, as mentioned in a previous chapter, are quite discreet from actual political processes. On the other hand, the term "fiction" also activates somewhat negative connotations, by this very virtue of its perceived opposition to the concepts of "truth" or "reality." Read in this manner, the term "fiction" seems to stress the spurious nature of popular sovereignty in this particular historical context. In other words, "fiction" can be read as referring to a consciously crafted narrative that does not represent the actual material conditions in any way. The employment of this ambiguity suggests that the foundation of the National Assembly implied both, the beginning of a normative and narrative shift in the conception of France's potential polities,

and the attempt to use this new norm to veil the lack of the actual transformations that the same would imply for material power conditions.

More emphatically than Woloch, Lewis associates the consolidation of bodies uniting Third-Estate deputies with the waning power of monarchical rule in revolutionary France. The ambiguity intimated by Woloch does, however, actualize itself in the conduct of the debate on the rights that newly established representative bodies were bound to acquire. Lewis places the decisive point which marks the transition towards popular sovereignty as operational principle with the consolidation of the "constitutional committee" in the fall following the Storming of the Bastille (29). As he goes on to explain the importance of this historical instance,

> by this time, nothing could hide the crucial fact that the king would henceforth have to rule on behalf of, and through the medium of, the French people, not on behalf of the aristocracy. In case there should be any doubt on this matter the Assembly, on 10 October, decreed that henceforward the king would be "Louis, by the grace of God, and the constitutional law of the State, King of the French". […] For nothing could really mask the essential fact that power, including the power of the purse, had effectively passed from the Court to the *representatives* of the French people, the crucial point being that it would be the Assembly which initiated legislation, its decisions only being passed on to the king for his royal sanction. (ibid.; emphasis in the original)

This passage elucidates the symbolic correspondence between the loss of monarchical prerogatives and the gain of visibility of signifiers pertaining to increasing popular sovereignty attached to positions of executive power. Thus, the customary title that announced the divine legitimization of monarchical power now had to be complemented by an advertisement of the other and much more currently important source of legitimacy, namely the popular mandate as determined by the representatives of the people and manifested in the constitution. Lewis presents the new role of the king in the light of the representative function that now came to the forefront of the mode of operation in politics. Stating that the monarch would find himself obliged to make executive decisions "on behalf of, and through the medium of, the French people," Lewis suggests that the king himself

assumes first and foremost a representative function. In that light, the necessity to retrieve "royal sanction" for any piece of legislation agreed upon in the National Assembly appears as a somewhat formalistic due paid to the previous political structure which endowed the king with political powers in his own right. As shall be further expounded later on, the vestige of the prescriptive model of mixed government can be presumed to have motivated the formalistic adherence to the display of such a "royal sanction."

In the context of the institution of the National Assembly, but also in the context of framing outlines of polities and constitutions in later periods of the French Revolution, a discussion of the mechanism of representation assumed an increasingly central position. In her essay "The Revolutionary Sublime," Marie-Helénè Huet echoes the concerns of contemporary revolutionary philosophers, such as Rousseau and Robespierre, and also explicates what transpires in the analyses of both Woloch and Lewis: "While political representation is a Revolutionary conquest, as soon as representatives form a government, they also create the threat of another faction, a group of interests that will alter, even disfigure, the idealized expression of the common will" (Huet 59). It is important to note that Huet's use of the noun "faction" is not meant to designate only interested associations uncommitted to the actualization of what Rousseau refers to as the general will as it becomes patent in elections; it is also meant to draw attention to the phenomenon of political division to which the same "indictment" was extended during the revolutionary period (Huet 58).

Here, one may feel reminded of the bias some politicians of the Early Republic exhibited toward the manifestation of political division and dissent, advocating what they perceived as harmony, or homogeneity, instead. Melvin Edelstein, for example, emphasizes that both Revolutionary France and the Early Republic were political spaces in which the elites were highly critical of any concept of political pluralism that might express itself in the formation of different parties and oppositions (cf. 173, 174). Rafe Blaufarb revues the historiography on democratic processes during the revolution and specifically praises historian Patrice Gueniffey, whose chief merit consists of locating the failure to achieve a lasting pluralistic and democratic government in the very conception of democracy as put forward by the revolutionaries, which did not include a conceptual place for opposition or dissent. Blaufarb summarizes this point by stating that, ultimately, a transformation of the conception of sovereignty took place only superficially (cf. 609). Instead of revolutionizing

the concept, Blaufarb continues, the revolutionaries only "confiscated traditional absolutist authority from the monarchy and vested it in an elected, representative assembly," which was, however, capable of supporting "neither fragmentation, nor limits, nor opposition" (ibid.). Therefore, "dissent became treason, and opposition became plot" (ibid.). Against the backdrop of these convictions, political parties and their contenders appeared as manifestations of the threat of dissent, opposition, and division to a popular sovereignty that was set as "undivided and obsolete" (ibid. 610). This adherence to imperatives of harmony and the avoidance of dissent can also be attributed, both in the case of the Early Republic and revolutionary France, to a very strict interpretation of the notion of the "general will" as introduced by Rousseau in *The Social Contract*. As Caroline Weber points out introducing her analysis of the said text,

> [t]he constitution of a truly egalitarian society, Jean-Jacques Rousseau maintains throughout his 1762 treatise, requires each citizen to submit willingly and utterly to the dictates of communal harmony. Such conformity often demands the suppression of personal interests and instincts that could undermine the greater good […]. (1)

Focusing on this postulation, Weber analyses texts of the philosophers who impacted the French revolutionaries and detects in them what she calls a "politics and poetics of Terror" and a "Terrorist program," which she defines as "one that, on the civic and the linguistic level alike and often with oppressive consequences, seeks to efface all difference for the sake of absolute stability and control" (ibid. 3). One can also argue that rather than being concerned with the consolidation of a volatile sociopolitical environment through an insistence on homogeneity, however, the accurate and equitable safeguarding of the projection of the will of the electorate seems to have prompted the revolutionaries in France to view particular interests and dissent as detrimental. Thusly motivated, they developed a sense for the necessity of safeguarding the accountability of the representatives by referring them back "to the wills (in the plural) of the people, to their infinite multitude" (Huet 59). Huet's paraphrasing of Robespierre in this instance highlights that the regard for the accuracy of representation as apparent in an accurate projection of the general will on political power structures always implies the conceptual bearing of multiplicity as a structural determinant.

As Lewis speaks of the "French people" on whose behalf the king, but also the National Assembly, was now supposed to act, it is necessary to cast a brief glance upon the distribution of political rights in revolutionary France. While the notion of the king as sovereign was forcefully replaced with the concept of the people as sovereign, it is important to keep in mind that the initial stages of the Revolution were characterized by a very exclusive definition of citizenship and therefore of who could play an active part in the institutions of the popular sovereign. Serge Aberdam reports the findings of an analysis of "electoral documents" (187), stating that "1790-93, in a land of some 28 million people, with 44,000 communes, between 4.5 and 6.5 million citizens were qualified to elect perhaps 1 million public and military office-holders" (ibid.). Such a restricted electorate hardly corresponds to the conceptualization of the voting people as an "infinite multitude" put forth by Robespierre around roughly the same time. Lachenicht directs her readers' attention to the fact that women were not included in that electorate and that non-white residents of France were categorically denied the rights of active citizenship until 1794 (cf. 41). Incidents surrounding the political struggles for female suffrage in the later phases of the revolution are particularly telling of the gender-based exclusions from active citizenship and their logic: Especially the case of women's rights activist Théroigne de Méricot, who was arrested in 1793 to serve time in a mental institution, was indicative of the revolutionary bias against the political emancipation of women (Aberdam 184). Aberdam evaluates the incident most tersely in stating that the "incarceration […] reduced feminist politicization to madness" (ibid.).

What exacerbated the political exclusions was the rigid social stratification according to professions and education. Colin Lucas asserts that the "primary articulation in Ancien Régime society was not the distinction between the privileged and the Third Estate; rather, it was between those for whom manual labor provided their livelihood and those for whom it did not" (47). This division is reminiscent of the aforementioned social and cultural biases of the Early Republic, and just as they did not disappear after the revolution in America, they remained intact in France. However, a re-evaluation of this division nonetheless took place. Retracing the revolutionaries' debate on the importance and preferred kind of education to bring what are commonly referred to as "republican virtues" closer to the populace, James Livesey mentions the critical stance towards the "[d]ivision of labor" taken by some philosophers, who posited it to be opposed to the formation of a numerous, politically

informed and interested class that would assert its political agency (97). Summarizing the revolutionary Henri-Baptiste Grégoire's convictions regarding the preferred kind of education prospectively conducive to the formation of republican virtues in the French, Livesey writes that "[t]raining in agricultural science would make citizens of all Frenchmen, and their agricultural disposition would found an alternative political economy to one based on luxury goods" (102). And once again, the aforementioned ideals of austerity and frugality, so vital to the construction of civic virtue in the Early Republic, are resonant in this outline of the prospective French citizen.

It is of particular interest in a discussion that aims to identify the intersections between Deistic and democratic discourses that the immediate dealing with and manipulation of nature was to foster the republican-minded attitude as well as self understanding as a citizen endowed with political agency and power in the former subjects. As the next chapter elucidates, the emphasis on the importance of direct interaction with natural phenomena and their scientific exploration for the formation of political agents seems to echo the Deist imperative to the scientific observation of nature in order to disabuse oneself of notions of the validity of claims to power on Christian theological grounds: Deism proposed to engage in a type of scientific interaction with one's natural environment that had the potential of equipping the individual with the knowledge and argumentation necessary to competently contradict institutions interested in using a religious and theological discourse to perpetuate a certain status quo, if it was safe to do so openly or not. It is further striking that both, American Republicans in the Early Republic and French Revolutionaries believed in the transformative power of agriculture in the project of encouraging civic values finally conducive to the formation of a democratic republic and an individual self-conceptualization as citizen. As Livesey puts it, "[e]very version of the regenerated Frenchman seems to have been a farmer" (104); at the same time and in spite of the mentioned biases against manual labor, the yeoman farmer was a Republican cultural icon in the United States, with notable American politicians of that time such as Jefferson and Madison linking "independence with landowning and agriculture" and supposing that "republican institutions would survive only in a nation predominantly of farmers" (Shankman 205); and even Aristotle conceived of the ideal citizens of a democracy as farmers, representative of the oldest form of democracy in Greece (cf. Saage 62). It is however necessary to note that an increase in political awareness among the French farmers and

rural population in general had begun several decades before the Revolution, so that the citizen farmers, understanding themselves as political agents, were by no means only an invention of revolutionary educational theorists (Livesey 107).

Yet this revolutionary valorization of agriculture was also to some extent stabilizing present power structures. The importance of the division of labor when it comes to maintaining a well-organized society did not, as Emmet Kennedy points out, escape the philosophers of the French Revolution, who for this very reason contained their readiness to extend far-reaching privileges of education and political participation to all members of society (71). Stating that the "Enlightened" were very skeptical regarding "popular education," he summarizes the prevailing views of intellectuals and philosophers in a series of emphatic rhetorical questions:

> If peasants moved from the country to the cities, who would work the plows? If they were to learn Latin, who would learn husbandry? How would all those products of farm labor on which the elite depended reach the towns and cities? If artisans and servants were to become poets and actors, who would perform the many manual services on which the age depended? Writers on popular education ultimately favored improvement only within a stable framework. (Kennedy 71, 72)

This negative view on the extension of education to a wider circle of beneficiaries certainly reflected the intellectuals' classist attitudes towards the organization of society. Echoing instances in which Voltaire and Turgot depicted handymen and farmers unfavorably, Kennedy states that "[t]he philosophes were not beyond looking with contempt on the people as beasts of burden deprived of intelligence" (71).

Another instance of continuity established itself from the time of the *Ancien Régime* into the Revolutionary period along the ambiguity activated by the new normative narrative of popular sovereignty. This continuity concerned the immense centralization that is commonly said to have characterized France before the Revolution. Henry Heller identifies the high degree of centralization in France before 1789 as one major reason for the possibility of the Revolution. According to him, the "absolute state had deprived the French nobility of much of its ability to control the rural population or to withstand revolt," a condition exacerbated by the nobility's practice of not asserting their presence in rural

communities and rather choosing to dwell in urban centers or in the vicinity of the King (Heller 66). This degree of centralization considerably debilitated the stance of the nobles outside of the urban centers of power and contributed, as Heller goes on to explain, to the gentry's lack of capability to assert its position during the revolutionary events of the late 1780s: "The comparative ease with which the power of the nobility was overthrown in the countryside as result of popular disturbances in 1789, testifies to its social and political fragility" (ibid.). However, and as pointed out previously, the newly formed representative bodies were keen on retaining that structural characteristic of centralization.

The use of the "fiction," to once again echo Woloch, or the normative narrative of popular sovereignty and of its accompanying mechanism of political representation to retain a highly centralized system of power distribution points to the risk of the abuse of power stemming from a conflict of interest between the governed and those representing them. The question of who might benefit from the propagation of the said "fictions" and narratives is simply answered after reading the passage quoted above: the deputies who declared themselves to constitute the very body supposed to represent, through its development and its operations, the concept of popular sovereignty. Naming this process of the establishment of the National Assembly a "juridical revolution-from-above" (22), Woloch further calls attention to the problematic nature of claims to the embodiment of popular sovereignty and the representation of the people. Woloch explains the evolution of this problematic narrative on the example of the development of the image of the British Parliament:

> From the modest, plausible fiction that a deputy can stand in for a whole community and in turn bind that community by his actions, British statesmen such as Edward Coke and Edmund Burke extrapolated the more demanding fiction that such deputies actually represented the people of the entire nation. Effectively wielding the power to govern the country, the locally chosen representatives claimed that their powers derived from the sovereign people as a whole. (Woloch 23)

It is of incidental interest in this context that Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine are regarded the polar opposites of political thought in England during the late 18th century and that Paine's *Rights of Man*, as is widely known, was written in answer to Edmund Burke's highly unfavorable evaluation of the French Revolution, just three years prior to the publication of

The Age of Reason. Of central importance, however, is the concretization of the practical implications of the "fiction" of popular sovereignty. These implications entailed that deputies aspired to no longer be seen as the representatives of very particular groups and interests – groups and interests that were largely congruent with their very own. The disregard of such evident limitations and necessary qualifications of the principle of representation, at least in the construction aspired to by the deputies, is precisely what marks this revolution as one from above. To put differently, rather than practically dispersing the conceptual source of political power, as the notion of popular sovereignty would imply, to comprise the electorate in a system of direct democratic participation, the instituted system of representation once again focused political power in one element, namely the assembly. Again, Woloch finds apt words to describe the process, "[w]ith the concept of popular sovereignty filtered through this rigorous notion of representation, the Assembly firmly established the Revolution's locus of power at the top right from the start" (Woloch 23).

As this quote intimates, one further characteristic retained from the times of the monarchy is the lack of immediacy between the governed and those in power. It is of particular interest that the said process can be properly described employing the metaphor of filtration, as Woloch does. Filtration implies the presence of an element that serves as an interface between two spheres, impeding full contact between them. To paraphrase, the principle of representation, in particular the kind of representation envisioned by the deputies of the National Assembly, and thereby also the National Assembly itself, function as that kind of filter or interface that keeps popular sovereignty from full contact with the sphere to which it is by definition ascribed, namely the people. In other words, the factor that hinders the people to identify as the political sovereign and that therefore intervenes between the people and political power is the institution of the National Assembly. This institution exemplifies the general principle of political representation as well as this principle's similarity to the interface in the shape of the monarch. The fact that the choice of words in this description entails the phrase "locus of power at the top" further accentuates this structural similarity between representative political bodies and the monarch. The noun "locus" translates as "place," implying a clear and identifiable element whose position "at the top" implies its prestigious and powerful dominance over the rest of the system's components.

The relevance of the prescriptive outline of mixed government for the conceptualization of a reformed French polity should also be noted in the context of retaining centralization of power and inserting interfaces between the governed and their superiors. The importance of the monarch was retained beyond these earliest stages of the revolution and it also impacted the self-understanding of the National Assembly, which in many ways saw itself as the monarch's successor. This similarity between the monarch and the National Assembly regarding the function as interface also indicates the conceptual importance of the king for any normative political construction even after the revolution had begun. In particularly this valuation of the prospective role of the monarch in a new political regime, Woloch sees an important difference between the French and the American nation building projects of the late 18th century:

> The need to reach an accommodation with the past imposed itself, for example, on the question of the monarchy. Where the Americans in the Constitutional Convention of 1787 had a blank slate on which to design the executive branch of their federal government – allowing them to erect a strong yet limited presidency – the French had little choice but to incorporate their king into the new regime. Almost no one considered republicanism as a practical alternative at this juncture, although some historians see the outcome as republican in everything but name. (25)

Here, in this very brief comparison between the processes of devising new constitutions in America and in France, one could depart from Woloch's notion of an American "blank slate" regarding the attitude towards monarchy. Of course, the historian is very much right inasmuch as there was no established monarchy in the form of a physically present and personally localizable king there on American soil. I would, however, assent to the notion of the "blank slate" only in this regard of the absence of one actual king as the representative of monarchy in America. Yet conceptually, it is patent that the figure of the king and the institution of monarchy had both very much been on the revolutionary American mind, if only to provide the revolutionaries with an image in opposition to which position themselves. Furthermore, the figure of the king was more than a symbol of oppression during the period after the revolution. In this context, the negative view of democracy prevalent at that time needs to be taken into consideration, just as the belief in the virtue of

balance (Cotlar 15). As explained, the fear that democracy was inherently unruly and chaotic predisposed to sentiments favoring at least some monarchical element to be present in the polity. Therefore the "blank slate" was very much distorted by general assumptions about the uses and dangers of different polities. The king still remained a vital element in the conceptual political framework of many contemporaries, while a republican democratic polity had negative and possibly dangerous connotations that did not reach far beyond the definition of "mob rule." When the Revolution finally acquired a truly radical character with regard to a thoroughgoing change of France's political system, a process often dated to have started with the execution of the king in January of 1793, the characteristic of centralization of power still remained. Lachenicht notes that while each region in France defined the revolution on its own terms when it comes to the activities of revolutionary clubs and their projected reforms, Paris remained the Revolution's most important hub throughout the process (35). The newly forming groups of political revolutionary agents, however, remained attached to the principle of centralization.

As frequently pointed out by historians, the period of the Terror, roughly dated from the execution of the king in 1793 to the institution of the Directory in 1795, supported tendencies countering decentralization. David Andress locates the beginning of the phase commonly referred to as "Terror" during the revolutionary period in the year 1793, but connects it to the intensification of the war that took place following the regicide (295). The concomitant intensification of the draft prompted populaces in the western areas of France, already discontented with the revolutionary course, to engage in "riots that became uprisings, and within a few weeks a major insurrectionary threat to the Revolution in the name of throne and altar" (ibid. 295). This discontent was exacerbated by the influence that old reactionary elites in the country could exert on the process of the draft, which thus often focused on those of revolutionary sympathies challenging the power of the rich and influential peasants (Holzapfel et al. 229). Attempting to contain the uprisings in the Vendée in the West but also in other areas of the country, the National Convention, successor to the National Assembly, established numerous "surveillance committees" issuing "civic certificates" to those it deemed not dangerous to the Revolution, a precondition to engage in commerce and mobility (Andress 295, 296). As Paine biographer Hesketh Pearson informs the reader, Paine was himself the member of one such committee, which allowed him to intervene on the behalf of foreigners in Paris (151). The country became increasingly

interspersed with operatives sent by the National Convention to foment military subscription and to gradually assume control of "all aspects of economic and political life" (Andress 296). These activities were coordinated by the "Revolutionary Tribunal" in the country's capital, whose task it was "to judge counter-revolutionary crimes" (ibid.). However, the legal provisions for the operation of these "representatives on mission" were not precisely formulated, wherefore malicious denunciations following a political rationale increased (cf. Thamer 79, 80).

In addition to the sporadic uprisings in different parts of the country, grave divisions "hovering on the brink of violence" (Andress 296) dominated politics in the capital. This division unfolded between the Montagnards and Jacobins on the one hand and the Girondins on the other. As W. A. Speck points out in his *Political Biography of Thomas Paine*, "[i]t is usual to describe the Girondins as moderates and the Jacobins as extremists" (127), while also noting that "[i]t has been suggested that a more appropriate way to distinguish between them is to regard the Girondins as idealists and the Jacobins as pragmatists," by which account Paine belonged to the former formation (ibid.), sharing their conception of the revolutionary processes and goals (cf. Blakemore 25). A core question over which the division was actualized was whether to end the monarchy by executing Louis XVI, of which the Jacobins were in favor, or whether to maintain both monarchy and king alive, advocated by the Girondins and Paine (Andress 296). Both groupings were accusing each other of intentions contravening the Revolution: The Girondins were distrusted on account of their suspected allegiance to monarchy and aristocracy, while the Montagnards and Jacobins were repudiated for intent on "spreading disorder and hindering the development of a steady republican system" (ibid.).

As Andress summarizes the events of the summer of 1793, in which power struggles and violent fights continued between Jacobins and Girondins in major cities, "[o]ut of their factional disputes, the revolutionaries conjured a second civil war" (297). These conditions were exacerbated by the military conflicts underway in the West, especially in the Vendée, and in the Noth-East and East, where foreign armies were progressing into the country with renewed vigor after the execution of the king, perceived as a provocation by European monarchies (ibid.). Referring to the uprisings in the Vendée and other parts of the country, Audrey Williamson remarks that "[t]he centralization of government in Paris, the aim of the Jacobins whose great following was there, was beginning to be felt and resented in the more

prosperous French districts […] as the Girondists, always largely a provincial-based party, started to lose their grip" (197). Drawing a parallel between Paine's American and French experiences, Williamson further points out that his encounter with "states jealous of their prerogatives" as well as the inconveniences such endeavors brought to any centralized power structured Paine's political work on both sides of the Atlantic (ibid.).

These processes in the rebelling provinces contributed to a significant increase in prices, which called for stricter regulations (Andress 297). Andress points out that "external pressures produced further harsh laws, creating a bureaucracy to track down food supplies and decreeing the death penalty for anyone judged to be 'hoarding' or 'speculating' with such stocks" (297, 298). As Williamson writes in the context of the intensification of the Terror in Paris, the number of executions per week increased from under ten to roughly 200 in the course of a year from mid 1793 to mid 1794 (207), noting that "[n]ational security was menaced by war from without, and rebellion within" and comparing the effects of the tumultuous insecurity and violence to a "blood-red tide" (ibid.). As Williamson also informs the reader, Paine himself had misgivings regarding his own potential execution in the face of his refusal to vote for that of the king (206). In spite of the chaotic conditions marked by factional hostility, a constitution that Andress characterizes as "transparently democratic" (298) found itself "ratified by popular vote" (ibid.). However, as Andress goes on to state, "the political leadership, now joined by Maximilian Robespierre on the Committee of Public Safety, shied away from allowing it to come into effect when so many citizen were revealing themselves to be traitors" (298). Paine played a chief part in drafting that constitution, drawing from the convictions he had previously expressed in *Rights of Man* (Blunck 154, 155; Woodward 238). As Gary Kates so aptly puts it, it was chiefly "[o]n the laurels of his writings" that Paine found himself a member of the National Convention, especially considering that he was "the only Anglo-American" in this body (570).

Surveying historiographical renditions of that phase, Patrice Higonnet states that the Terror is often cast as "the illegitimate child of the Enlightenment" (122), or as an instance of "a perverse and quasi-religious consequence of Enlightenment thinking" (124). In contrast to this consensus, Higonnet proposes the explanatory power of the notion of trauma, which is a "psychological syndrome which describes a private reaction to dehumanizing violence" (155). This approach allows Higonnet to conceptualize the Terror in its continuity to the traumatic violence of the revolutionary events of 1789 (ibid.), thus subverting the

paramount attention bestowed on the Revolution's ideologues and Enlightenment philosophers previously. Similarly, John Markoff underlines the importance of recognizing the continuities and overarching patterns in the uses of violence in the French countryside, thus sharpening the understanding thereof as more than a mere reaction to the policies proposed by the center. Markoff proposes an appreciation of violence as a strategy for achieving democratization against the backdrop of a rigid "signeurial regime" (259). One example is of particular relevance to the perception of the French Revolution: As Markoff puts it, "[i]t took years of rural violence to push the revolutionary legislatures to make of the dismantling of feudalism a reality recognizable in the villages. And it is far from obvious that they would have done so without the wartime stresses" (261). This fact in mind, he advocates to conceive of the "disruptive insurrection" of the revolutionary period as "part of the modern history of democracy" (ibid. 264) proving a view of the French Revolution as the achievement of "highly educated élites" to be reductive (ibid.).

Furthermore, the Terror transformed the conception of the body of the sovereign. In the context of her analysis of the legal foundations of the Terror, Carla Hesse refers the construct of popular sovereignty to a particular construct of the body that differs significantly from that of the monarchy. She gives to consider that before the Revolution, the "crimes of treason and conspiracy" were formulated in a manner as to suggest that they were directed at the very corporal existence of the monarch (798). The fact that the person found guilty of such crimes would be "drawn and quartered" is tantamount to a "ritual re-enactment on the body of the criminal" (ibid.) and points to the fact that the law was conceptualized strongly in terms of concrete corporeality. Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* famously opens with a similar observation. Both Hesse and Foucault reference Ernst Kantorowitz's theory of the abstract doubling of the monarch's body, which is perceived both as a living organism and as a signifier of the state, with which Kantorowitz explained concepts of the state in the Middle Ages (Hesse 707; Foucault 28). Thus, every crime has a double effect, for "[b]esides its immediate victim, the crime attacks the sovereign: it attacks him personally, since the law represents the will of the sovereign; it attacks him physically, since the force of the law is the force of the prince" (Foucault 47).

The French Revolution, however, fundamentally altered the structure of the sovereign, at whose "center" the monarch's body was no longer located (Hesse 704). Instead, the structure of popular sovereignty had to resemble, as Hesse suggests, the

visualization provided by Sieyès, who envisioned "a sphere with an infinite number of radical lines emanating from the center, each end point representing a citizen, equidistant from the sovereign center of the law" (ibid.). Hence, during the Terror,

> [t]he will of the sovereign gave way to the law of the sovereign, rather than the law to his will. The authority of the law had to be saved before its sovereign source could be definitively defined. The laws of the Terror, then, were laws promulgated in the absence of a fixed referent of their subject. This became a semiotic, and a literal civil war to stamp out the enemies of an as yet undetermined sovereign: the Republic was to be what the monarchy was not. (Hesse 709)

Paine's writing of The Age of Reason is most commonly interpreted as a reaction to Jacobin anti-religious policies and the overarching movement of dechristianization. Suzanne Desan explains that "radical revolutionaries had come to view Christianity as the rival cosmological and moral system that had provided the frame and underpinning of the monarchy and the traditional order" (4). This movement thus became a concomitant trait of the politics of the Terror and occurred in its most vigorous form after the eruptions of physical violence had subsided in the parts of the country most affected by counter-revolutionary uprisings, answered by revolutionary forces. As William Doyle describes the circumstances immediately after the heaviest fights between the revolutionaries and the resistance in late summer of 1793, individual representatives on mission, so-called agents of the National Convention in Paris dispatched to ensure that the provinces would follow the lead of the capital, were the first ones to further dechristianization before it became an official policy decreed from the center of power in Paris (259).

In this context of early dechristianization in revolutionary France, William Doyle particularly lingers on the importance of a few such representatives on mission. The first representative on mission mentioned in this respect is Joseph Fouché, whose presence in the region of Niévre, as Doyle puts it, "transformed it into a beacon of religious terror" (259). Doyle goes on to explain Fouché's resolution to radically diminish the impact of the Christian religion on the Vendée, previously the center of counter-revolutionary agitation and violence (ibid.). In that western region of France, "he had witnessed the ability of the clergy to inspire fanatical resistance to the Republic's authority. Christianity, he concluded, could not coexist

in any form with the Revolution […]" (ibid.). This conclusion, amplified by his powers as a representative on mission, lead to the institution of "a civic religion of his own devising" (ibid.) in Niévre. This religion particularly attacked the celibate lifestyle of the priests and declared "universal morality" its only "cult" (ibid. 260). Doyle sees these processes of change brought about by Fouché as the initiation of "the movement known as dechristianization," which was then carried to Paris by observers and proponents (ibid.). In other parts of the country, representatives on mission mandated the destruction of churches and church possessions, the appropriation of churches for the purpose of celebrating new cults pertaining to the civil religion, and the public coercion of clergy to abandon their faiths and celibacy (ibid. 260, 261).

Doyle remarks on the importance of this movement in the effort to diminish the likelihood of a continuation of anti-revolutionary rebellion in regions previously prone to such:

> dechristianization became an important feature of the Terror in all the former centres of rebellion when they were brought to heel. Once launched it was eminently democratic. Anybody could join in smashing images, vandalizing churches (the very word was coined to describe this outburst of iconoclasm), and theft of vestments to wear in blasphemous mock ceremonies. (260)

Dechristianization likewise implied the introduction of a calendar whose beginning was not set to be the birth of Jesus Christ, but rather the institution of the new government of France, which had proceeded on September 22 of 1792 (ibid.). This new calendar's division into ten-day weeks, three of which would constitute a month, also interfered with Christian worship as it effectively abolished the Sundays and the corresponding church traditions associated with that day (ibid.). Especially on account of such interventions into the every-day experience of religion, dechristianization has profoundly impacted the way in which Deism, in the 18th century all too often conflated with atheism, was to be perceived for the years to follow. Dale K. Van Kley notes that "the 'atheism' of the French Revolution was the most alien aspect of its international message" and was one of the chief motivations for opposing it (1083). Charles Lyttle examines the progression of new, non-Christian forms of worship during the 1790s instituted in the stead of traditional forms of Christianity as the revolution, and with it the movement of dechristianization, proceeded. Focusing on the

"Cults" of Reason, of the Supreme Being, of Theophilanthropy, as well as on the already mentioned implications of the nullification of the calendar of the church, Lyttle explains the adverse effect that the conjoining of political interests with such religious expressions had on the frames in which Deism came to be evaluated (22). He states that

> it became almost a tradition for decades to consider the four phenomena together as brilliant illustrations of the Deistic philosophy of religion, with the overt or implicit suggestion that they stand as incontrovertible proof of the infatuation of radical doctrinaires and of their folly in supposing that the religious impulse could be suffocated, or that its forms of expression nonchalantly improvised, or its nature changed from that of faith, mystery and revelation to that of reason and morality. (ibid. 22, 23)

William F. Ricketson and Jerome D. Wilson point out that Paine's rationale behind writing *The Age of Reason* followed a similar conviction, for "[w]hile he had made a solid break with the medieval past, he was not ready to discard belief in God" (87) and was hence ill at ease when faced with the Terror's intent to violently dismantle any notion of the religious. Gregory Claeys notes that specifically "the spectacular bloodbaths" he observed during the Terror convinced Paine that "the goal of revolution – the improvement of mankind – required the injunction to sociability which he thought belief in a Divinity facilitated" (177). Ricketson and Wilson thus also recognize the motivation for writing *The Age of Reason* in Paine's "disillusionment" with revolutionary politics after the execution of the king on January 21, 1793 (cf. 83, 84). When Paine, as a member of the National Convention in his role as a delegate of Calais (ibid. 82), found himself unable to convince either Girondins or Jacobins of his arguments for the preservation of the king's life (ibid. 83), he "abandoned hope that liberty, equality, and fraternity would be spread to the nations of Europe" (ibid. 84). He then directed his attention to the issue of faith because "he had already noticed that, just as attacks upon the government had led to inhumane considerations, so attacks upon religion were leading to atheism" (ibid.).

The later revolutionary insistence on dechristianization, coming into full effect in the early 1790s and thereby immediately preceding Paine's writing of The Age of Reason, should not, however, be evaluated as the only logical emanation of revolutionary ideology. As Eva

Schleich describes the interaction of the revolutionaries and institutionalized religion, the first rifts between the Catholic Church and the revolutionary French government did not start to appear until 1790 (182); therefore, they should not be considered a default result of the revolutionary events of 1789. Desan notes a similar affinity when it comes to the ambits of human life that the churches were made to surrender to "the new political culture" which now "took over didactic, sacralizing, and regenerative functions and characteristics which had previously been the exclusive reserve of religion" (Desan 5).

Furthermore, dechristianization appears as a possible, but not necessary consequence of the proliferation of revolutionary ideology on account of the Christian churches' initial collaboration with and support of the revolutionaries. At first, the tightly knit infrastructure of Catholic churches that extended over the whole of France was regarded a considerable boon when it came to the proclamation and propagation of the new revolutionary ordinances (Schleich 179). Reading Hans Maier's contribution to the study of the role of the Catholic Church during the French Revolution, one must also note that this institution played a very important part in supporting the revolutionaries in the process of the consolidation of the National Assembly and of its impact, as well as in the process of propagating its ideas (cf. 107). This fact seems to belie the total equation of the institutions of the Christian religion with monarchist and tyrannical oppression as carried out by Paine. This totalizing equation can surely be attributed to the particular period of Paine's writing *Age of Reason*, namely during the period of Jacobin rule.

Speaking of religious formations during the French Revolution, one can note that in contrast to the period of the American Revolution, in which Deism found its adherents mostly among the educated political elites and was not defended vocally, the period of the French Revolution saw a rather more prominent negotiation of this particular religious leaning. Charles A. Gliozzo argues that the views of those revolutionaries concerned with furthering the movement of dechristianization "were nurtured from the deistic and atheistic writings of the *philosophes*" (273). He emphasizes the importance of Voltaire's thought for the dechristianization of deism during the French Revolution, both with regard to his impact on the views of "dechristianizers," who greatly admired him, such as Anacharsis Cloots (ibid. 257), and also with regard to the views on and conceptions of the Deist godhead, which gained a wider audience through Voltaire. In short, Gliozzo directly relates Voltaire's brand of deism and the movement of dechristianization during the French Revolution, suggesting

that the former was useful to bring the latter to fruition (275). Substantiating this claim, he focuses on Voltaire's conception of the figure of Jesus Christ and adduces Voltaire's repudiation of "[t]he doctrine of the Incarnation, that Christ was the God-Man" (ibid.). Summarizing Voltaire's views as expressed in different essays contained in the *Philosophical Dictionary*, Gliozzo states that

> Voltaire stressed the fact that the Christians took three centuries to deify Jesus, but the latter had never stated that he was consubstantial, having two wills and two natures within one person […]. For Voltaire, Christ was no ordinary man, for God had chosen him to be the model of reason and of virtue, a man distinguished from other men by his zeal, fraternal equality, and love. (275, 276)

On account of his views on the Christian religion Gliozzo calls Voltaire "a major precursor of dechristianization, who expressed both constructive and critical deism" (274). After a brief inquiry into the sociopolitical features of the Antebellum, these observations concerning the intellectual history and overall relevance of Deism in political contexts of transformation and revolution once again step into the foreground.

Jacksonian Democracy

Although Deleuze and Guattari, as quoted above, ascribe a rhizomatic quality to certain aspects of American territory and culture (*A Thousand Plateaus* 21), the particular phase of Jacksonian Democracy can be regarded one of the "knots of arborescence" in American history. In the following section, different aspects of Jacksonian Democracy are investigated under the premise that the principles of reciprocity, transparency, and accountability, as exemplified in the outlined system of rhizomatic panopticism and postulated as at the basis of democratic polities, were subverted in significant ways by the office of the presidency. This section thus focuses on Andrew Jackson's usage of vocabularies and symbols appealing to advocates of decentralized power and popular influence in order to achieve the very opposite thereof. As a result, American society and the American political system became a place belying the image and professed ideals of popular democracy with an intentionally weak political center, of classless society marked by social and financial fluidity. As this section explains, a powerful presidency, political centralism and elitism, as well as social

immutability and economic inequality were the markers of American social and political reality since Jackson assumed office in 1829. In Emerson's *Nature*, published one year before the end of Jackson's last term in office, an implicit criticism of these contemporary sociopolitical conditions is chiefly undertaken in the chapter on "Discipline," and is engaged with throughout this section's historical contextualization.

Jacksonian Democracy was characterized by an ambiguous relation to popular political participation and influence. Providing a historical frame for the rise of Transcendentalism, Len Gougeon notes that Jackson's rise to the presidency marked a time when "politics was imbued with a new and decidedly democratic spirit" ("Politics and Economics" 136). While many scholars agree that Jackson's policies aided a renovation of American institutions, making greater popular power the objective of changes in the image of offices and political institutions, these policies eventually effected greater centralization of power, strengthening the presidency. Evaluating Jackson's enactment of respect for the electorate during the ceremony of inauguration, in which the presidential address was followed by the new president's bow to the public, Daniel Walker Howe concludes that

> [t]he symbolic gesture expressed an irony at the very heart of Jackson's presidency. Despite the bow, Jackson brought to his task a temperament suited to leadership rather than deference. Although he invoked a democratic ideology, the new president had profoundly authoritarian instincts. (328)

The spoils system is the most conspicuously noted element of Jackson's "ironic" synthesis of mutually contradicting images of "deference" and actual policies expressive of "authoritarian instincts." Quoting Jackson in his alleged conviction "that more is lost by the long continuance of men in office than is generally gained from their experience," Carl N. Degler presents an altogether favorable account of Jacksonian Democracy (152). He notes that Jackson's promotion of the spoils system, or "rotation of public office" as it was officially referred to, made possible a "democratization of administration on both the federal and state levels," preventing the development of "any remote civil service which was divorced from the people or which conceived of itself as a superior caste or class, outside or above the main body of the citizenry" (152, 153). "Rotation" thus became "the great watchword of Jacksonian democracy" (Shklar 61). Indeed, employing vocabularies of democratization

allowed Jackson to induce a re-evaluation of the image of public offices: While they used to be regarded as demanding a certain set of acquired and honed faculties in a particular field of expertise, Jackson encouraged their perception as universally accessible. This re-evaluation seemed to permit the American political system to fully actualize the conceptual potential of democracy. Disassociating the holding of political offices from a requirement of proved competence was interpreted as and act of evening out the inequalities of economic and social character, which facilitated the access to education or powerful circles for some individuals while rendering it impossible for others; thus, Jackson seemed to curtail the exclusionary effect of "privilege" (Howe 334) as well as to profess a will to add transparency to the network of political offices by expanding their ease of access.

Jackson's motivation behind the apparent democratization of rhetoric regarding public offices, as historians also aver, was however not entirely driven by the opportunity to realize and promote democratic ideals of popular participation in America's political reality: The described process of the reassessment of the character of political offices helped Jackson to gradually replace an established elite with officials whom he thought to owe allegiance only to himself, wherefore the socioeconomic background of the new men in government positions did not change to represent the electorate more accurately, while corruption and an overall deterioration of the administration's efficiency led to a decrease of "the prestige of public office" (ibid.).

The practice of giving such "authoritarian instincts" a democratic appearance was aided by moods and demands that had already been manifest in the electorate. Stephan Thernstrom argues that the tendency towards an implementation of "mass democratic politics" started to be noticeable in previous decades, so that Jackson must be considered the beneficiary of these processes, and the discourses they engendered, rather than their designer (325). An increase of the indicators signaling broader political involvement of the governed during Jackson's time in office, such as augmenting numbers of citizens casting their votes in elections, after ownership restrictions for white males of major age had been gradually removed since the beginning of the century, was a result of "the innovative efforts of party workers to mobilize the electorate" against Jackson's opponents (ibid. 326), and not a sign of the manifestation of genuine equality. In different words, Jackson availed himself of pre-existent popular exigencies for greater political control in order to put into operation a system of office distribution that, justified by a democratic semblance, allowed the president

to concentrate more power in his own office; thereby, the transparency of the incentives behind the nominations for public offices was greatly reduced.

Nature references the official justifications of the spoils system. In what can be read as an implicit criticism of the abandonment of meritocratic principles, the narrator begins to define the traits of wisdom against those of foolishness in a person:

> The whole character and fortune of the individual are affected by the least inequality in the culture of the understanding; for example, in the perception of differences. […] The wise man shows his wisdom in separation, in gradation, and his scale of creatures and of merits is as wide as nature. (Emerson 27).

First, it must be noted that a proclivity towards actions of ordering and constructing distinctions is presented as an attribute of "the wise man." Transferring its positive connotations on the actions that are said to be its expressions, the quality of "wisdom" charges these actions of ascribing difference and establishing demarcations with a positive meaning. While this favorable evaluation of differentiating processes could be interpreted as a way of legitimizing discrimination and socially and politically fortified disparities and unfairness, it can also be read as an admonition to recognize "differences" as the actual state of society, rather than to accept them: The "wise man" is able of a "perception of [the] differences" that surround him, both in nature and, by analogy, in society, and does not subscribe to the assumption of an allegedly present equality among all individuals, as proposed by the maxim underlying the spoils system. It can well be said that the recognition of heterogeneity is established as a marker of "wisdom." Above all, the reference to a nuanced evaluation of "merits" as a distinct virtue of the "wise" alludes to the realm of politics. As mentioned, exactly the merit of the Jacksonian political elites was to be questioned and their likeness to the governed doubted. Jackson made it a pillar of his image to be a man of the common people and indeed fashioned himself as "the first president with whom many ordinary Americans could identify" (Howe 330). Emphasizing the importance of the awareness of differences, the narrator highlights the incongruence between the ideal of a common, unsophisticated man as a representative of the voter and the reality of politics, implying that both, the present elite's likeness to the people and its merit should be mistrusted. Accordingly, believing in the existence of such an equality is regarded a sign of

foolishness, for, as the narrator goes on to explain, "[t]he foolish have no range in their scale, but suppose every man is as every other man. What is not good they call the worst, and what is not hateful, they call the best" (Emerson 27). Refuting that "every man is every other man," the narrator concludes the construction of the "character and fortune" of the individual as contingent upon the recognition of disparities. While this recognition's impact on the individual's "character" becomes apparent through the opposition between "wisdom" and "foolishness," the influence on the individuals "fortune" is less obviously marked. The reference to "fortune" however implies a material significance, in its meanings of both, destiny and wealth. The judgment regarding an individual's character as well as future condition as dependent upon the right evaluation of disparities expresses an encouragement to doubt the propagated discourses of equality and endorse an acknowledgement of heterogeneity, instead.

Turning to nature as the construction of an ideal space, the narrator further outlines the traits of a society opposing the characteristics of Jacksonian Democracy: Apart from the admonition to show distrust towards constructions of equality, nature, according to the narrator, is expressive of an imperative of morally righteous behavior. Thus drawing from his understanding of the capacity of nature to be employed by "Man" to "comprehend himself" (Yannella 31) and to provide images of symbolic value for the sphere of the political, the narrator highlights this importance of morality as the principle of action and material organization:

> All things are moral; and in their boundless changes have an unceasing reference to spiritual nature. Therefore is nature glorious with form, color, and motion, that every globe in the remotest heaven; every chemical change from the rudest crystal up to the laws of life; every change of vegetation from the first principle of growth in the eye of a leaf, to the tropical forest and antediluvian coal-mine; every animal function from the sponge up to Hercules, shall hint or thunder to man the laws of right and wrong, and echo the Ten Commandments. Therefore is nature ever the ally of Religion: lends all her pomp and riches to the religious sentiment. (Emerson 28)

In this passage, the accumulated variety of natural phenomena is said to instruct the individual about the most fundamental dichotomy that is at the basis of any inquiry into

morality, namely “right” vs. “wrong.” To put it more succinctly, the narrator insists on the presence of an example of righteous action in nature. The authority of nature’s model of morality is impressed upon the reader through its representation as a “law of right and wrong,” fixated and enforced by a divine authority defining the ordering of the ideal space. Grouping the elements of the enumeration into the four different categories of astronomy, chemistry, botany, and zoology, each separated from the other by means of a semicolon, the narrator augments the authority of the law of religion with that of the laws postulated by natural science, granting the former superiority over the latter: The observable and scientifically quantifiable phenomena found in nature are represented as the manifestations expressive of divinely destined principles; the movement of the planets as well as the organization of chemicals, plants, and life forms shall serve as a an illustration of a transcendent, exemplary order. In this instance, the forceful reference to religion can be read as an appeal in support of a practice that stands emblematically for both, the enforcement of the particular dichotomous morality conceived of as characteristic of religious thought, as well as for the submission to the presented principles’ transcendent authority not to be questioned. Especially the latter aspect, along with the enumeration’s personification expressed in the verbs “hint or thunder” as well as “echo,” evokes images of imposing reprimand and threat. Citing the religious law of the Old Testament’s Decalogue as well as the wrathful reaction of God upon the breach of the commandments in the Old Testament’s narrative, the narrator voices an insinuation of punishment upon a transgression. Personifying nature as “the ally of Religion,” he constructs this realm as following the logic of morality and judgment according to the Judeo-Christian religious system of instruction and castigation upon wrongdoing. In summary, the narrator states that every aspect of the natural world is informed by an awareness of and a respect for the “law,” of which nature is to remind its beholder. In view of the thesis that nature is constructed as an ideal sociopolitical space in opposition to contemporary reality, this representation can be read as a call for a stricter adherence to moral and legal standards in the realm of politics, in relation with a sterner insistence on the exposure and enforcement of notions of accountability and responsibility.

Further elucidating the ideal inclusion of an individual into a system governed by the principles of morality, the narrator conceives of nature as determined to achieve a certain

goal, namely to exemplify righteousness and to conform individual interests to its parameters:

> This ethical character so penetrates the bone and marrow of nature, as to seem the end for which it was made. Whatever private purpose is answered by any member or part, this is its public and universal function, and is never omitted. (Emerson 28)

Especially the alliteration of "private purpose" insinuates the implications of the spoils system and contrasts this political ill against an ideal state defined by the subjugation of personal objectives to an "ethical character," whose actualization is a goal unto itself. The secondary character of individual motivations is articulated through nature's personification: Stating that it possesses "bone and marrow," the narrator endows the natural sphere with physical features that are indicative of the conceptual presence of a bodily structure whose foundation and core are determined by the "ethical character." The next statement contains a continuation of the personification, stating that "any member or part" of nature's body follows the "public and universal function" of exemplifying morally blameless action in the pursuit of "private purpose." It is also important to highlight that the higher objective of informing the onlooker regarding the features of virtue is characterized as a "public and universal" cause. These adjectives intimate a political meaning, underlining that the said individual motivations as well as their defining greater ethical principle are transparent in their conformity with that tenet and not subject to exemptions from their subservience to it. The requirement of a general and not negotiable transparency to characterize the actions of any member of society is thus established as the major trait of morally virtuous political and social interaction.

During Jackson's administration, however, a lack of transparency was perceived as an urgent political problem and had effects that would define the shape of politics in the decades to come. One expression of the popular perception of insufficient transparency was a radical change in the public image of secret political circles and organizations as well as their impact on American politics and society, spawning "periodic outbreaks of conspiracy theory" (Jenkins 102) and concerns regarding the motivations, objectives, and practices of these groupings. This development of public concern was a sign of the lack of trust and the degree of suspicion felt towards Jackson's government. The movement of Antimasonry was

a particularly noteworthy expression of the fear of an anti-democratic threat and, to some extent, of anti-Jacksonian sentiment: After the abduction of a former Mason who had ventured to lay bare parts of the order's undisclosed rituals in a publication – a criminal case whose solution was delayed and hindered by officials – citizens organized to protest the infiltration of the administration by agents of that secret circle, especially since Jackson, the most powerful representative of the political class, was known to be a Mason himself (Norton et al. 334, 335). Masons' concealed networks, the invocation of monarchic vocabularies in their rituals, as well as the socioeconomically exclusive character of participation were seen as "antidemocratic and antirepublican" as well as "satanic" by religious institutions (ibid.). The demand for transparency and accountability led the proponents of Antimasonry to institute the practice of gathering in conventions in order to nominate the contenders in races for political offices, thus furthering "grassroots involvement" and stimulating the evolution and provoking the advance of sharper profiles of political parties such as the Whigs, whose emergence is considered to mark the beginning of the American two-party system (ibid.). The fact that greater independent citizen participation during Jackson's administration was provoked by an increasing sense of distrust towards the president, rather than broad identification with him, as his image would suggest, is a direct consequence of the above-mentioned "irony" pairing discourses of transparency and popular interest with practices of the opaque promotion of personal advantage.

This irony regarding the disconnection between image and reality applied to the sphere of socio-economics, as well. While the myth of social upward mobility seemed to be actualized and made palpable through the figure of Jackson himself, data suggests that the era of the Jacksonian Democracy was characterized by constancy rather than mobility. The distribution of goods, land, and capital did not at all follow the logic of fluidity and transmutability, but remained concentrated in certain strata of society. After the scrutiny of the available contemporary documentation of, among other papers, tax records, Edward Pessen comes to the conclusion that, in the beginning of Jackson's time in office, a disproportionally high percentage of capital concentrated in any locality was possessed by a minor fraction of "wealthy taxpayers," who managed to double the segment owned by the end of the era of Jacksonian Democracy (81). Pessen goes on to infer that the classless character of American society during that era, often discerned and vividly depicted by

prominent Europeans such as Alexis de Tocqueville (77), should be evaluated as an image that arose due to a lack of visibility of the actual conditions of the farmers, the workers, who "lived lives of unparalleled precariousness" (84), and other urban poor (85), particularly to visitors from abroad. Stating further that merely two percent of the richest city dwellers had previously experienced poverty, he dismantles "*intragenerational* social or vertical mobility" as a characteristic of Jacksonian society (87; emphasis in the original), an inference made further plausible by the absence of voluntary social association between individuals of diverging economic backgrounds. Just like the rotation of offices had not facilitated the rise of Americans of humble economic backgrounds to positions of power, the economic conditions during Jackson's administration were not productive of remarkable financial or social opportunity. The semblance of social fluidity and general material comfort was a result of hardship's and class inflexibility's lack of exposure to view.

According to the narrator, material goods, which are directly related to the individual's position in a socioeconomic system of references, have the potential of rendering obvious the principles of an ideal political space that is informed by the symbolism found in nature. Drawing on a likening of nature and the divine, the narrator suggests that

> [i]n God, every end is converted into a new means. Thus the use of commodity, regarded by itself, is mean and squalid. But it is to the mind an education in the doctrine of Use, namely, that a thing is good only so far as it serves; that a conspiring of parts and efforts to the production of an end, is essential to any being." (Emerson 28, 29)

Using the term for the unsurpassable religious authority with a preposition "in," endowing the concept of "God" with a spatial quality, can be read as both, a metaphorical speculation on spiritual principles concerning the structure and purpose of the material realm within a religious system of belief, as well as an indicator of the likeness of "God" to "nature" as a material space whose principles are of authority. Both readings let the formulaic thesis "every end is converted into a means," expressive of the said principles, appear as the ideal and authoritative standard when it is subsequently applied to the material world. In line with the standard in this manner specified is the judgment that "the use of commodity regarded by itself," which is to say consumption for its own sake, should be seen as "mean and squalid." The employment of this last hendiadys is emphatically expressive of such

consumption's unworthiness. It is implied that only consumption which can be "converted into a new means" may escape an evaluation as expressed by these depreciative epithets of "mean and squalid." The "new means" that an ideal mode of consumption brings about, as the narrator further particularizes, is the exemplification of the very principle stated in the introductory formula, whereby the right mode of dealing with material goods is elevated to the status of a "doctrine of Use": Only when these material goods are understood as tools for certain ends can their usage be regarded a correct one.

In this instance, the narrator seems to advocate a rhizomatic connection between the human being and material possession. As has been shown, the narrator disavows the regard for the materiality of objects in their appearance of singular integrity. Instead, he professes to be solely interested in the gaining of understanding, expressed as the process of "education," and, thus, the process of becoming that these material objects provoke. Therefore, verbs pertaining to semantic fields designating certain processual progressions, such as "conversion" and "service" are referenced in describing the ideal impact of commodity on the human being. The worth of material objects is thus defined to be based on their ability to generate associations between two states of mind, rendering the individual using them transformed and challenged in his own presumed fixed integrity. These transformational processes are presented to actualize themselves in an ongoing manner, since "every end is converted into a new means." The formula implies that one state of an arrival in understanding is likewise a state of possible departure through understanding, leading to a new state in a continuous process of association. By this virtue, "the doctrine of Use" proposes the establishment of connection between different conditions and situations as its main tenet. This emphasis on connection and becoming through transformation implies a criticism of the absence of these characteristics in the contemporary interaction of individuals and material objects. The lack of social mobility during the time of Jackson's presidency as evidenced by Pessen can be read as one expression of the criticized absence of connection between different socioeconomic states and classes. As expounded above, financial fluidity allowing the individual to surpass notions of stagnant social positions was exceedingly limited during the Jacksonian period of the American Antebellum. The emphasis on commodity's use to induce connection, transformation, and becoming in *Nature* can therefore be read as a construction discursively countering the socioeconomic rigidity of American society during Jacksonian Democracy.

Related to the socioeconomic problem of social mobility is another ambiguous policy engendered during Jackson's administration, which is immediately connected with the subjects of credit, debt, and the American banking system. Arguing that the concentration of the power to influence the quality of American money in one institution was chiefly undemocratic, Jackson vetoed the continuation of the Second Bank of the United States, instituting in its stead the so-called "pet banks," controlled by Democrats loyal to Jackson, in every state; in his manner, control over monetary policies was resituated in the office of the president, ensuring "a fitting Jacksonian hold on the federal purse" (Norton et al. 341). While professing to protect the public from the monopoly of privileged elites, unfavorably epitomized in the media of the Antebellum by the president of the Second Bank of the United States Nicholas Biddle (Howe 373), the president transferred the authority to design national monetary policies from one center of power to seemingly many, who were, however, predominantly aligned with him. This outcome exacerbated the effect of the impending boom in land speculation, decisively limiting the legislature's control over local banks (Heideking 142) and allowing them to expand credit and increase the amount of insufficiently redeemed bank notes in circulation (Schlesinger 128, 129).

The publication of *Nature* coincides with the climax of the "speculative craze" (Norton et al. 341) and includes passages indicative of this phenomenon. Pessen points out that the "moralists," among whom he sees Emerson, "were appalled at illusory wealth begotten by near worthless paper" (140). And indeed, a criticism of contemporary modes of consumption, denouncing speculation, is also voiced through the narrator's outline of the parameters of the purpose of credit: Indirectly referencing the contemporary financial phenomenon of speculation, the narrator characterizes the mechanisms of debt as potentially instructive of the correct way to deal with the material environment. In a seemingly more undeviating reference to the legislation of 1832, which banned the incarceration of debtors and professed to counteract the "loss of status" of the working people suffering under the "industrial poverty" effected by the transmutations of production during the previous decade (Schlesinger 132-134), the narrator presents his interpretation of the use of debt:

> Debt, grinding debt, whose iron face the widow, the orphan, and the sons of genius fear and hate; – debt, which consumes so much time, which so cripples and

> disheartens a great spirit with cares that seem so base, is a preceptor whose lessons cannot be forgone, and is needed most by those who suffer from it most. Moreover, property, which has been well compared to snow, – "if it fall level to-day, it will be blown into drifts tomorrow," – is the surface action of internal machinery, like the index on the face of a clock. (Emerson 26, 27)

This description of the effects of debt is preceded by the thesis that "[n]ature is a discipline," imposing on the human being "tedious training, day after day," with the primary objective being "to form the common sense" (ibid. 26). Hence, debt, as a mechanism accompanying the transactions occurring between human beings in the realm of the material, is personified as a strict "preceptor" whose severity is manifest in the texture of his metaphorical body, precisely in his expressly unsympathetic, unresponsive "iron face." Therefore, the troubling encumbrance that debt and its consequences signify for the individual is represented as part of the process of learning; the expenditure of time and the emotional weakening of "a great spirit," who is antithetically forced to tend to the very material and economic "cares that seem so base," are postulated to be necessary features of this specific learning. The emblematic disciples on whom the lesson of "common sense" in dealing with the material world is thus sternly bestowed are named to be those elements of society widely perceived as destitute, namely the woman without the economic stability a husband was deemed provide, the child without the protection of his or her parents, and the individual of artistic professional inclination. These exemplary sufferers of debt can be read to represent the poor and working people that were most vulnerable to the legal punishments of the "class law" that stipulated debtors' imprisonment (Schlesinger 134).

The statement that debt and the lessons it is constructed to impart are "needed most by those who suffer from it most" should not, however, be interpreted as the somewhat pitiless appeal to economic autonomy and self-reliance whose value the debtor must be taught through the difficulty of his or her situation: The following likening of property to snow references the economic phenomenon of the speculative land boom marking the 1830s, which went hand in hand with a vast expansion of credit. This reference, juxtaposed to the statement concerning the uses of debt, by implication distends the necessity of the lesson taught by such financial obligations from the destitute to the individuals involved in land speculation. In view of this extension of focus, the components of the enumeration of those that comprise the poor, namely "the widow, the orphan, and the sons of genius,"

cease to be the target of an intentional implicit exhortation to acknowledge an incorrect relation to the material world in need of rectification through the insights facilitated by debt; much rather, this group begins to serve as an example of a severe affliction, illustrating debt to those that, in spite of having incurred it, are not aware of its "lessons." An allusion to the expansion of credit, transforming its holders into debtors, albeit enthusiastic ones in their optimism concerning the success of their financial ventures, can thereby be inferred.

All in all, the narrator constructs debt to inform the individual of the fluctuating character of materiality, as debt seems to accompany its presence. The hazardous proximity between a situation of debt and the mechanisms governing the dealing with property is expressed by the recurring metaphoric use of the designation for the body part "face," which first serves to personify debt and is subsequently employed to construct property as a sign of unrevealed mechanisms, as "the index on the face of a clock." Comparing the character of material assets to the quick variability of snow, the narrator equates these material assets to superficial manifestations of "internal machinery," whose concealed functioning causes the transmutations that render it volatile and unreliable. In this manner, the notion that the presence of debt and of property follows similar covert operations, not to be inferred from the appearance of the "face," is fortified. This notion challenges the presumably fixed qualities of material possession and contributes to an understanding of property's contingent character. Since it is a vestige of "internal mechanisms," or operations undisclosed to most individuals, as the narrator maintains, these operations appear as the truly important field of inquiry, degrading the material to the status of a sign whose production fully rests on processes yet to be understood. Guiding the interest away from material possession to the processes causing it, the narrator, once again, proposes a contestation of the inherent integrity of property, favoring its conception as a junction of several flows of causation. This fluid conception of property can be read as precisely the "lesson" of debt.

Interestingly, the emergent reform movements find little unmediated reference in *Nature*. This lack of expression renders the mentioned difficulties of uniting the narrative voice of the dissertation with its author apparent. Emerson's biography reveals instances of anti-slavery activism, so that by the end of the Antebellum his initial "cooperation would become a de facto alliance" with "organized reformers in their opposition to slavery" (Gougeon, "Emerson, Self-Reliance" 194). Nevertheless, the corresponding political battles

and activisms of Abolitionism and Emancipation that had already formed by the time of *Nature's* production find but a rather generalized representation in the philosophical tractate; when the narrator speaks depreciatively of the "broil of politics," the "agitation and terror in national councils," as well as the "hour of revolution," (Emerson 23) debates incited by the various reform movements to challenge political and social conventions of oppression can be read to underlie the representation of a tense and chaotic political atmosphere. Apart from these general allusions, however, the narrator is bestowing attention on the contestations of received discourses that marked his implied historical context. In a similar manner, Jackson's various endeavors to displace, evict, and defraud the Native American peoples, often in intentional oblivion to federal law (Zinn 132), are not problematized by the narrator. In spite of Emerson's known support of Native American rights in the middle of the 1830s, Nature must be viewed as an example of what Joshua David Bellin terms the "silence" of "leading Transcendentalists" on the matters of "Native American political, territorial, and religious sovereignty" (198). Analogously, the reform movements aiming to achieve female suffrage are not focused upon. In spite of Emerson's documented involvement in "the women's movement" noticed by the scholarly community on many occasions (Gougeon, "Politics and Economics" 137, 138), the narrator excludes the possibility of a female subject from verbalized consideration in *Nature*. This fact grows apparent regarding the usage of the masculine singular third-person personal pronoun of "he" employed throughout the dissertation in combination with both the singular and the plural first-person personal pronouns of "I" and "we" to designate the actors in the considerations presented. Although this fact, along with the repeated occurrence of the gender designation "man" in stead of the said pronouns, is often interpreted as "the speaker's capacity to relinquish his particular identity and assume an ever more inclusively general one" (Poirier, "Is there an I for an Eye" 133), it is most indicative of an assertion of the culturally dominant subject positions rather than of an inclusion. While the narrator drafts designs of sociopolitical relations that counteract those active in Jacksonian Democracy and challenges hegemonic discourses of presumed equality and opportunity, he also exemplifies and asserts the hegemonic subjectivity of a white masculinity privileged through freedom and citizenship.

In summary it can be said that *Nature* comments on the socioeconomic and political concerns of Jacksonian democracy, suggesting challenges to dominant discourses upheld by political elites. In spite of this opposition, *Nature's* narrator exemplifies the white, male

subjectivity of hegemony, not granting subject status to individuals representing groups outside of the privileges of whiteness and masculinity. The opposition presented regards the political abuse of discourses of equality and equal opportunity in order to centralize power in the office of the presidency. The narrator applies his criticism of this discourse to the institution of the spoils system and to the effects of the disengagement of the Second Bank of the United States. Engaging in his elaborations the lack of transparency and social mobility that characterized Jacksonian Democracy, in spite of its positive image as facilitating both, the narrator disparages an understanding of wealth and property as fixed. In this context, examples of the right mode of conceiving of the relational and transitional quality of both material and social relations are often drawn from nature, which is presented as a model space contrasting the imperfect contemporary society. Only the conception of the social world according to these principles of transparency and transmutability found in nature, according to the narrator, can engender the ideal of a transparent society in which morality and accountability as well as connection and mobility reign.

As this brief historicizing overview of the Early Republic, the French Revolution, and the phase of the Jacksonian Democracy shows, negotiations of centralization, heterogeneity, transparency, and accountability as well as reciprocity and questions of equality have always featured prominently in contemporary political debates and discourses of democracy as well as in historians' analyses of the respective periods. Interestingly, Emerson, in spite of being evaluated as less politically inclined than Paine, offers many more specific and fitting allusions to these discourses as well as to the contradictions that they engender when contrasting them with material conditions to which they are applied. This observation recasts *Nature* as a tract with a plausibly political subtext – a tract not merely engaged in the communication of metaphysical postulates, but also in some implicit social and political commentary, precisely with the help of a discourse that retrieves its signifiers from the semantic field of the metaphysical. The next chapter elucidates the structuring of that semantic field of the metaphysical, more precisely of Deism and Unitarianism, which functions as a reservoir of signifiers for both Paine and Emerson.

5. The Deism and Unitarianism of *The Age of Reason* and *Nature*

This chapter provides some definitions and clarifications with regard to the religious formations of Deism, prominently relevant to Paine's tract, and the overlapping formation of Unitarianism, relevant in the context of the early Antebellum. Particular focus is placed on the constructions of these religious systems that Paine and Emerson undertake in their respective tracts. First, and to resume a thread taken up in the historical overview of the Early Republic, one can state that the religious systems of Deism and natural religion gained popularity in America as early as during the colonial period. Citing such important theological figures as Cotton Mather and John Wesley in their indebtedness to Deist thought (Aldridge, "Natural Religion" 837), A. Owen Aldridge states that "American ministers followed the reasoning of Anglican divines who argued, on the basis of the life sciences as well as on Isaac Newton's astronomical discoveries, that nature offers unimpeachable proofs of the existence of God" (ibid. 836). In spite of this trend, many historians and Paine biographers note that Deism was largely limited to "select groups of the literate upper classes" (Claeys 178) and its tracts to a very "educated readership" (Meltzer 147). As Winthrop S. Hudson puts it contextualizing Paine's impact on the religious landscape of the Early Republic, "Deist sentiment was not new in America, but hitherto it had been confined to an aristocratic elite who frowned upon widespread dissemination of their views" allegedly convinced that traditional forms of religious expression were beneficial to social cohesion and stability (127). This formerly limited platform enjoyed by Deism also contributed to the violent reception of Paine's tract, as its anti-clerical messages were now surpassing these limitations, being directed at and received by "a mass audience" and formulated in a "vivid, aggressive, antichurch tone" (Meltzer 147).

The affinity between Deism and political opposition, one that has existed since the inception of the former, should be kept in mind. While Aldridge does not go as far as saying that Deism predisposes its adherents to formulate ideas that run contrary to prevalent power relations and political realities in any one society of the time in question, he does note that the differentiation between Deists in the religious sense and oppositional thinkers in the political sense has at times been a hazy one in 17th- and 18th-century England (Aldridge, "Natural Religion" 836); as he puts it, a "seldom articulated distinction is between deists, who wished to proclaim a particular form of religion, and freethinkers, who envisioned the liberty of writing and publishing without censorship" (ibid.). As Roger L.

Emerson notes in his analysis of the status of radical Puritans in 17th-century England as trailblazers for Deism, such "heresies" were associated with the menace of political destabilization by contemporary apologists; therefore, "[l]iberty of conscience demanded by free spirits and free thinkers alike was continually deplored" by prominent apologists, according to whom "[r]eligious and political heresy here joined hands: neither worked for the greater glory of God and both should be sternly repressed" (390). Herbert M Morais marks this affinity between Deism and democratization in America in particular, which he connects to the very particular construction of the godhead in its apparent difference to that of Christianity, stating that "God was no longer represented as an arbitrary monarch, but as a constituted president, whose duty it was to administer the laws of the natural world for the glory and good fortune of an emancipated people" (437).

Defining Deism as a set of coherent theses regarding a metaphysical reality can pose a problem. As Aldridge points out echoing Robert E. Sullivan, the "term deism is so elusive that it should be taken merely as a label of convenience rather than a reference to a precise system of thought" (Aldridge, "Natural Religion" 836). The same difficulty of definition is understood to apply to the related term of natural religion, which is often treated as a synonym of the term Deism. In fact, investigations into the development of Deist thought seem to be habitually prefaced upon the difficulty of defining the term with satisfactory conceptual sharpness: Diego Lucci opens his inquiry into Deist deconstructions of Biblical texts with the same reference to Sullivan's statement of deism's elusiveness as Aldridge (17) and C. J. Betts's survey of deism in 16th-, 17th- and 18th-century France begins with the caveat that "[t]here is no adequate brief definition of the substance of deism" (3). Betts thus states that rather than "a religion in the usual sense," it was "the result of the individual's unaided reflections on God and man" (ibid.). A survey of both British and French early Deists as well as of the "deluge of apologetic literature" which they provoked (72) allows William Laine Craig to identify "the divided thinking concerning the immortality of the soul, the denial of God's providence, the appeal to one God transcending all the claims of particular religions" as well as "the denial of Christ's deity" as common features among the heterogeneous attitudes expressed by deism's different adherents (78). Similarly, and in line with Betts, Aldridge terms deism "a real system of truths available to all by the use of unaided reason" (Aldridge, "Natural Religion" 836). This brief explanation offered also by Peter Byrne in *Natural Religion and the Nature of Religion* indeed manages to do justice to those aspects of

Deism commonly recognized as its chief characteristics, most prominently its inclusive character that asserts itself in an environment of institutional independence and operates on the basis of a material, sensory, and scientific perception of the world. Craig associates the rise of deism in Britain historically with the emergence of "the movement of modern free thought, which, as a part of its rejection of all forms of authoritarianism and traditionalism, assailed the Christian religion in favor of a religion of nature" (72). Aldridge offers an increase in specificity by differentiating two strands in the belief systems of Deism and natural religion, stating that these two "exist in two forms, that which professes to discover God through the signs of order and contrivance in the physical universe and that which professes to discover God through the moral nature of man" (Aldridge, "Natural Religion" 836). While this differentiation offers some additional tools to analyze both Paine and Emerson, being especially useful for the understanding of the latter author, it is the first element of Aldridge's differentiated view on these systems of religion that will be of major importance throughout the analysis offered in this thesis.

Ricketson and Wilson trace Deism, particularly the kind professed to by Paine, by choosing as their point of departure the Newtonian "discovery of the law of gravity" (85), which lead to a proliferation of interest in the postulation of "simple and general Newtonian Laws that would reveal the secrets of the universe in areas other than the physical sciences" (ibid.). To these other areas Ricketson and Wilson count economics, represented by Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* of 1776, Rousseau's political science, and finally Deism in the ambit of religion (ibid.). As they formulate it, the "application of scientific thought produced Deism, which was based upon the simple hypothesis that God created the universe, hurled it into space, and allowed it to operate according to the laws of nature. This concept became known as the Watchmaker God: A Newtonian Law of religion" (ibid.). At the same time, they note Paine's indebtedness to Enlightenment philosophers, most notably John Locke for his insistence on the importance of experience (87), René Descartes for his emphasis on the general and unrestrained applicability of the principle of deduction (86), but also to those thinkers who had made the transition "beyond Deism to materialism" by 1789, radically questioning the conceptual requirement of the divine as such (ibid.). This historical observation should call to mind that while clerical and political reaction to *The Age of Reason* often cast Paine as a revolutionary and radical intent on harming the faith, he by no means

espoused the most radical evaluation of religion relative to science, as he retained the emphatic belief in a deity.

Gladly, neither Paine nor Emerson leave their readers with the necessity to consult the myriad of often contradictory contemporary sources on Deism to be able to accurately reconstruct their metaphysical worldviews from texts like *The Age of Reason* and *Nature*; clearly, these texts were at least to some extent intended to be read as professions of distinct belief systems. This intention is so strongly assumed to have motivated the writing of Paine's tract that *The Age of Reason* is commonly cited as one major source of reference for the (re-)construction of Deist thought in the late 18th century – Kerry S. Walters refers to this tract as "probably the best-known treatise in the history of American deism"(209). And this status applies to the said tract in spite of its clear positioning as a profession of what does *not* constitute its authors faith; as Paine himself puts it after stating the belief in one deity and an afterlife to constitute the main tenets of his metaphysical assumptions: "But lest it should be supposed that I believe many other things in addition to these, I shall, in the progress of this work, declare the things I do not believe, and my reasons for not believing them" (Paine 666). Such declarations notwithstanding, the tract contains plenty of passages that give rather precise indications of Paine's conception of the deity and the ethico-moral implications for human behavior growing out of it. Equally, Emerson's *Nature* is referred to as the first "manifesto of Transcendentalism" (Marx 12).

In *The Age of Reason*, Paine provides a comprehensive insight into his own belief system and the Deist elements therein contained. An important aspect of Paine's metaphysical system of belief is the postulation that it is to be arrived upon by the application of logical thought processes and deduction. In this feature Paine detects a main deviation of his metaphysical system of belief from that of the Christian religion. He states it in the following manner:

> It is only by the exercise of reason, that man can discover God. Take away that reason, and he would be incapable of understanding any thing; and, in this case, it would be just as consistent to read even the book called the Bible, to a horse as to a man. […] (Paine 688)

On the basis of the contributions of David C. Hoffman, Paine's situation in a discourse stemming from physico-theology must be noted. *The Age of Reason*, as Hoffman explains,

betrays marked similarities to the subject matter and style of this "apologetic movement" whose main tenet was that "the existence of an omnipotent and benevolent God could be deduced form the order of Creation" (284) and that therefore "the existence and attributes of God might be inferred through systematic observation of the natural world" (Connell 2, 3); physico-theology is thus the derivative of "Newtonian ideology" grows visible (ibid.). Paine's insistence on the "idea that reason is a gift from God, given so that humans might come to God" as exhibited in this passage, Hoffman interprets as the vestige of a physico-theological influence on Paine (295). Interestingly, this proto-Deist discourse also found employment in some Puritan sermons in colonial America: A conception of "nature-as-encyclopedia" figured prominently in the sermons of Cotton Mather and other influential Puritans (Jeske 591) and was facilitated by both, the speedy proliferation of scientific knowledge in the 17th century, and Mather's own enthusiasm for scientific inquiry, which induced his familiarization with important scientific tracts circulated at that time (ibid. 585). Rather than engendering a radically new discursive tradition, Paine can be understood to have utilized well-established strategies, albeit to other than apologetic ends.

In this passage, Paine also elaborates on the words of his preface to *The Age of Reason*, which is addressed to the American people and in which he states that "[t]he most formidable weapon against errors of any kind is Reason. I have never used any other, and I trust I never shall" (Paine, *The Age* 665). Form the status of a weapon, reason is now extolled to that of the only mental instrument by which conclusions regarding the existence and character of the divine can ever be formed. As said, Paine takes up a fundamentally Deist argument, which also resonates with physico-theology, as he "picks up the science-as-worship theme in order to oppose revealed religion with science" (Hoffman 299). This insistence on "reason" as the only enabling mechanism to "discover God" presents a significant departure from Christian presumptions on how knowledge of the divine can be achieved. Faith and revelation are usually the Christian mechanisms that allow approaching the divine and arriving at any conclusions upon the subject. As Edward Larkin points out in an analysis of passages in which Paine uses scientific thinking in order to challenge the Bible, Paine could rely on being well received by his readers on account of an increasing proliferation of scientific knowledge, as "in the context of the explosion of public science in the late eighteenth century Paine's point would resonate with readers, most of whom would have been exposed in some form or another to itinerant lecturers who would perform

experiments to demonstrate the latest discoveries or simply to amuse and amaze" (138). Since thus the methods of science, which according to Paine's Deism allow for an immediate acquisition of knowledge about the godhead, are made available to increasingly broader audiences, Larkin goes on to state that "[b]y transforming religion into science Paine effects the ultimate democratization of religion, for now religion is not subject to the control of any sort of institutional hierarchy or state affiliation" (141).

Paine privileges the operation of the human mind in the endeavor to come closer to accurate statements regarding the qualities of the divine. "God," according to Paine, operates on the basis of principles that the human mind can readily understand or deduce, not on principles that thwart or negate the human capacity for logical or scientific thought, which the noun "reason" seems to presuppose. To return to the quoted passage, one can observe that especially the verb "discover" establishes a connection to the natural sciences, as the discovery of phenomena, principles, and the like elements of the natural sphere form part of them. Here, Paine seems to suggest that God is comparable to such a principle of the natural world and can thus be deduced by scientific means, such as observation. This conception of the divine and its discoverability also implies an almost religious valorization of scientific methods, a stance George S. Hendry would criticize as the assumption of the "omnicompetence of science" (95). Hence, in an almost facetious manner, Paine underlines his privileging of the intellectual capacity of the human mind by likening the human being bereft thereof, or individuals who do not make use thereof, to animals. It is this conviction of a deducible, logically inferable knowledge of and about the godhead that informs Paine's exposition of his metaphysical beliefs.

The following passage, indicating two of Paine's thus deduced conceptions of the deity, thus also uses several references to scientific methods of logical deduction:

> The only idea man can affix to the name of God, is, that of a *first cause*, the cause of all things. And incomprehensibly difficult as it is for man to conceive what a first cause is, he arrives at the belief of it, from the tenfold greater difficulty of disbelieving it. It is difficult beyond description to conceive that space can have no end; but it is more difficult to conceive an end. It is difficult beyond the power of man to conceive an eternal duration of what we call time; but it is more impossible to conceive a time when there shall be no time. In like manner of reasoning, every thing

> we behold carries in itself the internal evidence that it did not make itself. Every man is an evidence to himself, that he did not make himself; neither could his father make himself, nor his grandfather, nor any of his race; neither could any tree, plant, or animal make itself: and it is the conviction arising from this evidence, that carries us on, as it were, by necessity, to the belief of a first cause eternally existing, of a nature totally different to any material existence we know of, and by the power of which all things exist, and this first cause man calls God. (Paine, *The Age* 687, 688; emphasis in the original)

This passage reflects Paine's agreement with two main tenets of Deism, namely firstly the conception of the godhead as the "first cause" and secondly its conception as the watchmaker. Both conceptions of the godhead Paine presents as the results of a logical thought process, in which the exclusion of other possibilities compels the author to arrive at the metaphysical conclusions he advertises in this instance. According to the first of the two conclusions, there is but one statement regarding the character of the divine that can be made with certainty, which is that it is the "first cause." With this term, highlighted in the setting by the italics, Paine incorporates a central understanding of scientific deism into his definition of the divine, which he further explains with the aid of the apposition of "the cause of all things." With this definition, Paine seems to subscribe to the Deist notion of God's role being circumscribed by that a creator who called the material world into existence, but who does not intervene into the same or "avoids interacting with it" (Smart 8). In contrast to the Biblical or, more specifically, to the Protestant and particularly Puritan conceptions of the godhead, with whom a personal relationship can be enjoyed[2] and who therefore can be expected to intervene into the material world in the form of miracles, the Deist conception, as mentioned, postulates a rather greater degree of distance to inform the relationship between the creator and the creation. In short, after having fulfilled the said causative function, the godhead is assumed not to have interacted with the material, created world. It is conspicuous, however, that Paine does not make this implication of the term "first cause" explicit, seemingly relying on the possibility that the Deist connotation

[2] Particularly the Puritan focus on and collective, institutional examination of occurrences of "private encounter[s] with spiritual forces," individual "experiences of conversion," and "emotional encounters with saving faith" reported by individuals as a part of normative religious experience (cf. Albanese 117) come to mind one characteristic of this construction of the divine as participating in individual human lives.

implying the said distance between creator and created will be sufficient to communicate this particular facet of the Deist definition of the godhead. Instead of exploring its implications, Paine focuses on the justification of this definition. This justification consists of a thought experiment that Paine sketches in broad strokes and at whose end the probability of an existence of a "first cause" is apparently vindicated as higher than any opposite possibility. The thought experiment consists of the relatively simple operation of stating that, generally, to accept finiteness is easier for the human mind than to come to terms with a potential infiniteness of time and space and that therefore both must have a beginning.

In the same manner, Paine proceeds to make the argument for the Deist understanding of the godhead as a watchmaker. This line of thought, however, is only relevant to Paine in so far as it serves to further justify the conception of God as the "first cause." Pointing to the human cycle of biological reproduction starting at "[e]very man is an evidence to himself, that he did not make himself," Paine suggest that this principle of human (re-)production applies to every element in the material world as well as to the material world in its entirety and wholeness. The quality of having been produced thus finds itself elevated to a general, uniting characteristic of everything that exists in the material world. In this context, it is important to note that Paine attributes to this characteristic the presence of an agent. Put differently, he takes the postulation that everything that exists did not create itself as the starting point for the supposition that another agent undertook this creation. As Paine formulates it, the awareness of the human process of (re-)production, which Paine terms "evidence" in an attempt to persuade the reader, "carries us on, as it were, by necessity, to the belief of a first cause eternally existing, of a nature totally different to any material existence we know of, and by the power of which all things exist […]."

This specification of the qualities of the godhead can strike the reader as somewhat of a contradiction to the postulations previously made. After all, granting the godhead the status of an uncreated entity seems somewhat abrupt after the emphatic presentation of "evidence" that everything is by the very virtue of its existence in the possession of an antecedent creator and its own process of creation. Paine tries to preempt this counter-argument by insisting on the fundamental unlikeness of the divine to any element of the material world; he states in this context that the deity must be "of a nature totally different to any material existence we know of […]." In this manner, he constructs the deity as being defined along the binary of material vs. immaterial, locating it at the latter extreme and thus

setting it in opposition to the material, created world. This opposition, which defines the godhead as an immaterial agent of creation – merely a "first cause," reinforces the notion of distance postulated to characterize the relationship between the deity and the material world, including the human being. In this regard, Paine reiterates the tenets of many of his Deist contemporaries.

Some passages, however, complicate this postulation of distance between the godhead and the material world in *The Age of Reason*. These passages indicate Paine's conviction that some divine presence can be detected in the material world. The following excerpt precedes the already quoted one and thus qualifies the professed Deist belief in a God solely functioning as a "first cause" and creating agent outside of the material world. Situating this passage in a refutation of the Bible's status as the "word of God," Paine formulates his depiction of the divine manifestation in the world in a series of emphatic and engaging questions:

> Do we want to contemplate his power? We see it in the immensity of the creation. Do we want to contemplate his wisdom? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible Whole is governed. Do we want to contemplate his munificence? We see it in the abundance with which he fills the earth. Do we want to contemplate his mercy? We see it in his not withholding that abundance even from the unthankful. In fine, do we want to know what God is? Search not the book called the Scripture, which any human hand might make, but the scripture called the Creation. (Paine, *The Age* 687)

Of course, this passage can be read without assuming much of a complication of the definitions of the godhead already explained. Simply reading these cumulative representations of God's presence in different aspects of material creation as in line with the suggestion that any created object is proof of its creator's existence and therefore carries with it a vestige of this very creator at all times, one could see in the quoted words nothing more than another reference to the expounded Deist conviction of the godhead as "first cause."

Several factors, however, indicate a deviation from that Deist definition in its strictest sense. The first of these factors would be the enumeration of fairly personal character traits

assumed to be indicated in various parts of the creation and attributable to the godhead. Qualities such as “power,” “wisdom,” “munificence,” and “mercy” exceed the fairly diffuse and general qualification of the godhead as a “first cause.” In fact, their cumulative effect induces the impression of a fairly complete presence of the divine in the material creation by the metonymic virtue of these qualities’ presence therein. In other words, the relative differentiation of these qualities goes beyond a mere statement regarding the existence of the creator when being exposed to the creation, as a simple exposure to created object does not necessarily allow specific conclusions regarding the creator’s particular character traits, especially when this creator is postulated to be little more than a “first cause.” The supposed possibility to deduce the qualities of the divine from specific phenomena in nature points to a greater presence of the divine therein than the aforementioned Deist definitions would suggest. This attempt at deducing the qualities of the divine from a specific perception of the character of creation has not prevented Paine from being liable to criticisms regarding a lack of strictness in the application of his own standards. In this vein, A. J. Ayer remarks that Paine “takes the benevolence of this deity for granted,” presenting “no further proof than the accomplishment of the Creation,” thereby himself showing a certain ignorance of the reality of “human suffering” (148).

The second factor indicative of a departure from a strict Deist definition of the godhead as a “first cause” is the pronounced anthropomorphization of the same in some instances. While already the comparison of the godhead to a “creator” betrays its conception in terms of human agency, the enumeration of human qualities and their attribution to the godhead further reinforce its comprehension in human terms. And not only is the deity represented as endowed with the mentioned human qualities, these qualities, especially “wisdom” and “mercy,” are also peculiarly similar to those commonly attributed to the Christian godhead. One further element that the anthropomorphization of Paine’s “first cause” has in common with the Biblical God in the hypostasis of the Father is the gendering as male, indicated in the quoted passage by the usage of the male personal pronoun in the singular when referring to the deity. It can thus be stated in summary that Paine’s godhead exceeds the strict Deist definitions of God as either a “first cause” or a “watchmaker” by being to some extent present in the world and sharing some qualities with both, human beings and the Christian godhead.

Another aspect of Paine's anthropomorphization of the godhead actualizes itself in the following passage, in which its didactic role is placed into the foreground:

> The Almighty Lecturer, by displaying the principles of science in the structure of the universe, has invited man to study and to imitation. It is as if he had said to the inhabitants of this globe that we call ours, "I have made an earth for man to dwell upon, and I have rendered the starry heavens visible, to teach him science and the arts. He can now provide for his own comfort, AND LEARN FROM MY MUNIFICENCE TO ALL, TO BE KIND TO EACH OTHER." (Paine, *The Age* 694; emphasis in the original)

This passage, which shall be of importance again in the last thematic chapter of the present analysis, gives the appearance of the human figure of a teacher and translates him to engage in a very particular utterance admonishing human beings to follow his example and the lessons he bestows as visible in the phenomena of nature. To put differently, this particular instance of anthropomorphization renders another important factor about Paine's conception of the deity clear: The deity intends human beings to learn from lessons supposedly inherently present in nature. In yet other words, Paine postulates the godhead to have put natural laws into place in order to communicate to the human being certain imperatives regarding correct behaviors and social organizations. Again, the divine role of the "first cause" seems to find an augmentation: Not only is nature as the creation of the deity indicative of specific divine qualities, nature's laws and phenomena have also been created in order to express specific messages to the beholder. Rather than just a "first cause" or a mere creator or "watchmaker," the deity appears as a constant presence in nature who seems to have inscribed important aspects of itself into its material creation for the human being to detect and to actively engage into various aspects of human life. Once more, Paine complicates his apparent belief in a strictly Deist godhead who is not intervening into the creation it has called into being.

While some scholars claim that "Paine's rational religion, which added virtually nothing to earlier eighteenth-century deism, amounted to a love of mathematics and astronomy" (Prochaska 562) and that "[h]is arguments were twice-told" (Smylie 209), it is passages like these that prompt other scholars to note a significant vestige of immanentism in Paine's definition of the divine, a vestige somewhat at odds with Deist professions of

belief. While Paine is commonly associated with Deism and is celebrated as a Deist writer, significant differences between his postulations on metaphysical matters and those of other Deists have been noted with both force and frequency. Jack Fruchtman provides a particularly persuasive account of Paine's inconsistencies with a purely Deist view of the material universe:

> Paine's writings were seriously ambiguous and muddled. He consistently claimed, for example, that he was a deist. To his eighteenth-century readers, deism meant the belief that after God created the universe and everything in it, he reserved to man the responsibility to improve it without removing the freedom to destroy it. Man became his own agent, a creature with free will to do good (or godly things) or evil (ungodly things). But Paine often wrote that after God had created the universe, he did not step back to allow men to do what they would do with it. On the contrary, he often either hinted or asserted that God literally permeated the universe. His was a constant divine presence, a being whose personality was immanent in all of nature. Such thinking gives Paine's ideas an ironic, indeed a logically impossible, twist: he reveals himself as both a deist and a pantheist simultaneously, a philosophically (and probably theologically) incoherent position. (Fruchtman 3)

Similarly, Walter Woll is convinced that the deity outlined by Paine in the entirety of his writing is not so much Deistic as Theistic "in so far as he believed in God's influencing the course of events, at least by means of the human conscience" (166). In many ways, this "pantheist" streak in Paine's conception of the divine could be the trace of a very common conflation of the transcendent and the immanent found to be operating in constructions of "civil religions": Robert N. Bellah surveys the depiction of God as it is undertaken in presidential addresses from Washington to Kennedy to retrace the molding of a "civil religion" in America. He contends that "the first few presidents, shaped the form and tone of the civil religion as it has been maintained ever since," particularly regarding the construction of a godhead that functions as the reference point in this context (104). Focusing on Washington, Adams, and Jefferson in particular and pointing out their refusal to reference Jesus Christ in their speeches (ibid.), Bellah states that

> [t]he God of the civil religion is not only rather "unitarian"; he is also on the austere side, much more related to order, law, and right than to salvation and love. Even though he is somewhat deist in cast, he is by no means simply a watchmaker God. He is actively interested and involved in history, with a special concern for America. Here the analogy has much less to do with natural law than with ancient Israel; the equation of America with Israel in the idea of the "American Israel" is not infrequent. (ibid.)

Bellah'a summary indicates the hegemonic intent of the said conflation of Deist and immanentist imagery in the politicians' construction of the godhead. This construction articulates, to some extent, the nation building myths convenient during the time of the Early Republic, activating notions of divine providence and of a land to be conquered in an expansionist sense. In recognizing the conceptual overlap in the constructions of the divine, it seems warranted to postulate that Paine simply inserts himself into hegemonic narratives of nation building in a specifically American context. In the manner of the presidents, he seems to construct a godhead whose unity and personal characteristics are reminiscent of Old-Testament accounts of a God as the Father; and in a similar vein, the explicit anthropomorphization allows for the projection of human, and more specifically of political interests and concerns, and thereby for their implicit legitimization.

Reading Brad S. Gregory's critique of the interaction between religion and science, and of the latter's categorical exclusion of any conceptual spot for a godhead in some cases, one can also evaluate Fruchtman's verdict on Paine's depiction of God as being inconsistent as slightly too intent on maintaining the dichotomy of "transcendence" vs. "immanence" intact. Gregory draws attention to the fact that "[a] radically transcendent God would be neither outside nor inside his creation," for "such a God would be wholly present to everything in the natural world precisely and only *because* he would be altogether *inconceivable* in spatial categories" (503; emphases in the original). This concession fundamentally disrupts the dichotomy referenced by Fruchtman, as now "[d]ivine transcendence" becomes "the *correlate* of divine immanence" instead of its negative (ibid.; emphasis in the original). Hence it follows that Paine's inconsistency with regard to the binary opposition of "transcendence" vs. "immanence" can be read as more than an affiliation with hegemonic narratives of nation building, although it certainly does not cancel

it. On the basis of Gregory's suggestions, Paine can be read as activating a notion of the divine that concedes its very divinity to a fuller extent than does Christianity.

Not unlike in the case of Paine, Emerson's metaphysical postulations can be inferred from his tract under analysis here. Before investigating the metaphysical claims formulated by Emerson, certain differences to Paine must be kept in mind before any statement regarding these metaphysical postulations should be formulated. The major difference regards the presentation of the tract's author and speaker. Paine clearly addresses his readers from his own name, prefacing his disquisition accordingly and featuring very prominently in the course of the text as a distinct person that makes frequent references to himself. The same cannot be stated for the presentation of the speaker in *Nature*. While the first person narration finds itself employed throughout *Nature*, a preface clearly and unambiguously identifying the speaker in the tract with the real-life author is absent from the publication. This observation seems highlighted by the fact that Nature was published "anonymously" at first (Marx 12). Nonetheless one might concede that the genre of the philosophical inquiry warrants the supposition that the conclusions entailed in one such, just as any statements that would qualify as professions of a metaphysical belief system, apply to the real-life author and were consciously formulated by the same to make his own, personal views on any one subject treated by him known. The marked difference in self-presentation and situating the narrative voice between Paine and Emerson, however, does not allow settling this question in the case of Emerson with a satisfactory degree of conclusiveness. As poetic, self-consciously style-oriented elements abound throughout *Nature*, and as that tract does not present itself as equally as pragmatic in purpose as *The Age of Reason*, the assumption of congruence between the narrative voice and the author should not form the default position of any analysis of *Nature*. I expect the value of this awareness of potential incongruence between narrative voice and real-life author to consist in a keener understanding of the potential dissociation between the messages that I am about to read in a religious and political way, and the biographical information available on the documented religious and political standpoints of the author. While it is Emerson that I use to predicate this consideration, I suggest it to apply to both authors under consideration here. It might be a most tedious point to make, but an awareness of the potentially precarious relationship between biographical fact and created text can only benefit, in my opinion, the analysis of texts that are presented as self-conscious professions of any author's beliefs or convictions.

Emerson formulates most of his overtly metaphysical claims in the last two chapters of his tract, called “Spirit” and “Prospects.” The following passage from “Spirit” elucidates some of the metaphysical tenets operating in *Nature*:

> Of that ineffable essence which we call Spirit, he that thinks most, will say least. We can foresee God in the coarse, and, as it were, distant phenomena of matter; but when we try to define and describe himself, both language and thought desert us, and we are as helpless as fools and savages. That essence refuses to be recorded in propositions, but when man has worshipped him intellectually, the noblest ministry of nature is to stand as the apparition of God. It is the organ through which the universal spirit speaks to the individual, and strives to lead back the individual to it. (Emerson 40)

In this passage, Emerson hints at his understanding of the place of the deity in the world and in its relation to the human being. It is important to note the oft noted characteristic of the Transcendentalist appellation of the divine, which means that the capitalized noun “Spirit” and the term used to denominate the deity in the monotheistic religious traditions, namely “God,” seem to be used synonymously. The other important element present in this textual instance is the continuous reference to a failure of language. Both of these characteristic features appear prominently in this paragraph’s first sentence. The individual who is truly concerned with the deity, according to Emerson, will abstain from expressing his or her thoughts verbally.

Likewise, the term “ineffable essence” is equated with “Spirit” and can therefore be read as another circumlocution for the deity. What is apparent regarding this set of synonyms is that the conception of the deity is purposefully diffuse and does not appear to be bound to an anthropomorphous image. This departure from the more prevalent representations of the godhead as a paternal, personal authority, as it is the case in the Judeo-Christian tradition, aligns Emerson with a rather more immanentist conception of the godhead. This immanentism finds itself expressed much clearer in the subsequent statements that identify the deity as expressing itself in the natural world. Following this line of reasoning, Emerson postulates the discernible nature of the divine in the ordinary, for “[w]e can foresee God in the coarse, and, as it were, distant phenomenon of matter”

(Emerson 40). Especially Emerson's conviction of the presence and recognizability of the divine in the natural phenomena and in material objects in general illustrates his alignment with the Deist conception of the godhead presented specifically in Paine's fusion of scientific deism and immanentism.

In this instance, Emerson seems to formulate himself the aforementioned elusiveness of the Deist religious conviction stated by some modern-day scholars of the subject. While the difficulty of articulation that he references with the adjective of "ineffable" modifies the capitalized noun of "Spirit" and therefore seems to apply primarily to this particular aspect of the divine, the subsequent description warrants the supposition that putting a coherent depiction of the godhead into words is likewise subject to difficulty. Processes requiring the believer to "define and describe" the godhead induce an inability to find the apt words. In this manner, Emerson's remarks in this instance seem not only to comment on a religious, but on a truly theological phenomenon. This phenomenon is constituted by the particular belief not rendering itself to systematization as intimated by the verbs "define" as well as "describe," whose alliteration further enhances the expectation of a coherent, harmonizing whole to result from the systematizing endeavor. This refusal to be subjected to strict definitions, hierarchies, and systematizations has of course always been identified as a main staple of Transcendentalism and its particular aesthetic in many of the ambits in which it came to exert its effect, from literature to communal lifestyles (cf. Brooks 243).

In a way, Emerson seems to suggest that the expression of the metaphysical assumptions by means of linguistic mediation is denied to the individual desirous thereof because it is indeed fundamentally unnecessary. The expression of these metaphysical "truths," as Sullivan and Aldridge would call them, is already constantly carried out by the phenomena found in nature and thereby by the whole of nature itself. Indeed, Emerson literally equates the material natural world with a language whose purpose is the expression of a divine message. He calls nature "the organ through which the universal spirit speaks to the individual," thereby metaphorically constructing nature as executing a first and foremost linguistic function for the deity. This view of nature is not only expressed in this seventh chapter of Emerson's tract, but receives an entire chapter's worth of attention, with the fourth chapter aptly entitled "Language" being prefaced on the thesis that nature functions as "the symbol of spirit" (Emerson 20). As language is fundamentally a system of

representation, its political import in Emerson's thought as presented in *Nature* will be of particular interest in the subsequent section of the present thesis.

This inability to put the metaphysical convictions into words seems to connote an aspect of agency and its negotiation played out between the individual and the divine. The peculiar formulation of "refuses to be recorded" with regard to the divine viewpoint on the individual's linguistic expression intimates that the individual's said inability originates with the divine. The reason for this apparent interdiction may be hinted at by the passive voice used in this instance: To allow the linguistic description of the divine is to allow its objectification, which seems to stand at odds with the active and creative position that the deity occupies in most conceptions. The said "refus[al] to be recorded in propositions" may thus not only extend to the conceptual content of the statement, namely to be expressed in words, but also to its grammatically conveyed implications, namely to be put into the passive position of an object being linguistically operated upon. This use of the linguistic faculty to demarcate agency is further developed in this passage's last statement, in which the active role of the user of language actualizes itself in the divine. The verb "speaks" refers to "the universal spirit" and is in the active voice. Furthermore, the last sentence establishes that nature functions as the "organ" of speech, once again supporting the image of agency along phallo-logocentric lines.

The quoted passage's last clause points to the reason why the expressive faculty must reside with the divine according to Emerson. Both Paine and Emerson put forward the thesis that the deity is immanent in the natural phenomena and in the processes and visible laws of nature in order to communicate something to the human being in his or her role as the observer of the creation around him or her. In Paine, this communicative intention is given very explicit expression by using the metaphor of the "lecturer" (Paine, *The Age* 694) to represent and personify the deity. Clearly, this particular anthropomorphization renders the intent of the deity as not purely communicative, but decidedly didactic. By this token, Paine's godhead is not merely in constant interaction with the human being by virtue of its immanence in the human being's material surroundings; the godhead also gives constant instruction about its very self to the human being by virtue of this material presence. In a further step, Paine postulates that the main reason for this didactic element is to give the observing human being a model to follow. Instances of dissimilarity between Deist writers and Transcendentalist ones such as Emerson are also important to heed in the context of

this thesis. Interestingly, Aldridge makes a point of mentioning Emerson in his brief account on the initial popularity of Deist thought in America, underlining however Emerson's lack of congruence with other Deistic thinkers, which unfolds along the lines of praising "individual inspiration" that Aldridge detects in Emerson's *Nature* but reports to be completely absent from the tracts of other, more properly Deist writers who predicated their disquisitions "solely on reason" (837).

After investigating the Deist qualities of the metaphysical worldviews as described in *The Age of Reason* and *Nature*, one has to note that some tenets of Unitarianism can also be detected in both tracts. This suggestion may be surprising, as Unitarians were among the most ardent attackers of Paine's *The Age of Reason* in the aftermath of its publication (Prochaska 564). It needs to be mentioned, however, that these attacks were, as Franklyn Prochaska points out, directed at Paine's apparent ignorance of Unitarian achievements regarding the "removal of much of the mystery and cruelty in the faith" rather than at the core precepts of Paine's propositions (566). Prochaska thus suggests that "[a]s in many intellectual disputes those with the views closest to the antagonist put forward the most embittered opposition" (564).

Unitarianism and Deism share some essential tenets but also general stances with regard to the desired position toward revealed religion, which, as Hoffman points out, was distinguished from natural religion by way of a "theological commonplace" at the time of Paine's writing (284). A reading of William Ellery Channing's sermon entitled "Unitarian Christianity," delivered in 1819 and outlining some of American Unitarianism's standpoints, shows some similarity to Paine's text. Lawrence Buell evaluates Channing as a "minister as sublime saint" and credits him with having "prepared the way for the Emersonian synthesis of religion and art" (*Literary Transcendentalism* 36). For example, Channing starts out with an explanation of his conception of the Bible and its proper reading, preempting accusations of heresy by prefacing his explanations with the affirmation of the Bible's status as "the record of God's successive revelations to mankind" (Channing). This tactic is, as shall be shown, highly reminiscent of Paine's engagement of the figure of Jesus Christ in his argument. In a like manner, Channing's insistence on the notion that "the Bible is a book written for men, in the language of men," so that "its meaning is to be sought in the same manner as that of other books," namely by the "constant exercise of reason" (ibid.), seems to constitute a reverberation of Paine's convictions, albeit in less acerbic terms. What

follows in Channing's sermon may well be read, or misread if one were to take Channing's professed acceptance of the Bible's revealed character at face value, as a fairly detailed criticism of the features that mark the Bible as a text "written for men." In the course of this criticism, he casts God in the image of a "Heavenly Teacher" who is interested in "adapting himself to the capabilities of his pupils," avers that "there is one God, and one only," alleging that the doctrine of the Trinity "subverts in effect, the unity of God," and identifies Jesus Christ as a "mediator," but not himself God (ibid.). Here, Channing shows considerable overlaps with Paine's thoughts as expressed in *The Age of Reason*.

In reaction to professions such as Channing's the orthodox, Calvinist, Trinitarian circles of New England developed a very distrustful view of Unitarianism. As C. H. Faust observes, "Unitarianism, it was said, being by nature opposed to belief, and having abandoned one theological position after another, would eventually lapse into infidelity" (301). Some of the theological mainstays of orthodox Christian doctrine that Unitarians had already dismantled by the 1820s were "the doctrines of human depravity, of the atonement, of the existence of Satan, of eternal punishment, and so forth" (ibid.). As Lawrence B. Godheart and Richard O. Curry put forward, the urgency with which orthodox Calvinists and Trinitarians sought to confront Unitarianism must also be understood in socio-cultural terms: As Trinitarian control over parishes seemed to falter in the 1820s, theological attacks on Unitarians increased (Godheart, Curry 284). This correlation implies that "[t]he Trinitarian indictment of Unitarianism was a protest against the erosion of traditional values which the Boston liberals personified theologically in their revision of the ancient faith, and socially in their 'immoral' lifestyle" (ibid. 288). In her essay "Who Were the Evangelicals?: Conservative and Liberal Identity in the Unitarian Controversy in Boston, 1804-1833," Mary Kupiec Cayton denominates this conflict recognized by Godheart and Curry as a "crystallization of a cultural as well as a theological moment" that amounted to a "clash of two divergent cultures" (86). As she goes on to note, this clash was exacerbated by the Unitarians' apparent adaptation to the changing structures of early antebellum economics, as Unitarians, more often than not, represented the classes "responsible for the developing structures and networks of mercantile and industrial capitalism" (94).

Similar to Deism, Unitarianism was often perceived as merely a "negative system" (Faust 309), defining itself on the basis of what it is not. Unitarians felt the pressures to cast such a classification aside, to which texts such as Ezra Gannett's treatise "Unitarianism not a

Negative System" bear witness (ibid.). Deists, on the other hand, were less keen on positioning themselves thus unambiguously, which gave rise to two strands of the movement, one that was positive or "constructive" and one that was negative or "critical" (Betts 3). According to Hoffman, *The Age of Reason* shows the presence of both positions (295).

One feature that both Paine and Emerson share apart from their immanentism is what may be called a Unitarian conception of the godhead that impedes the acceptance of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Both authors remark on the humanity of Jesus, albeit in different degrees of explicitness. As C. J. Betts explains, in early 17th-century France, "heretical Christians denying the divinity of Christ, and not anti-Christian free-thinkers" were often identified as Deists (15), wherefore the contestation of the Trinity can be expected to form an intricate part of Paine's identification as a Deist, irrespective of other positions. Paine tackles the issue of Jesus' status as the Son of God in the Christian faiths among the first things in his disquisition, making several statements that express his belief in the accuracy of claims suggesting that Jesus Christ was an actual historical figure, but ridiculing the claims that he was of divine descent or indeed God himself. Making such statements, Paine is conspicuously careful to express his agreement with Jesus Christ's teachings as well as with the notion that one is correct in admiring him. Paine writes the following account in such an instance:

> That such a person as Jesus Christ existed, and that he was crucified, which was the mode of execution at that day, are historical relations strictly within the limits of probability. He preached most excellent morality and the equality of man; but he preached also against the corruptions and avarice of the Jewish priests; and this brought upon him the hatred and vengeance of the whole order of priest-hood. The accusation which those priests brought against him, was that of sedition and conspiracy against the Roman government, to which the Jews were then subject and tributary; and it is not improbable that the Roman government might have some secret apprehensions of the effects of his doctrine as well as the Jewish priests; neither is it improbable that Jesus Christ had in contemplation the delivery of the Jewish nation from the bondage of the Romans. Between the two, however, this virtuous reformer and revolutionist lost his life. (Paine, *The Age* 671)

Most conspicuous about this passage is the politicized representation of Jesus that casts him as devoid of religious and metaphysical or supernatural importance. Paine renders Jesus as a first and foremost political figure whose "most excellent morality," greatly lauded by Paine with the help of an elative form of the adjective, extends as far as his championing of egalitarianism or "the equality of man." What other, non-political aspects Jesus' greatly extolled set of principles might have included does not seem to interest Paine in this instance. It is therefore consistent with this secular view of the presumed Son of God that Paine goes on to describe Jesus' potential implication into what appears to be a political power struggle over issues of financial fraud and colonial domination. Paine is thus judicious in setting up the historical scene as one determined by the colonial domination of the Romans, which facilitated fraudulent behaviors in the local theocratic class. Into this tension, Paine now inserts Jesus as a "virtuous reformer and revolutionist" – employing an instance of alliteration in this enumeration of functions that certainly intensifies the somewhat ostentatious effect of this paragraph's alternative reading of Jesus as a historical figure. This "reformer and revolutionist" is said to have incurred the animosity of the local ruling class for denouncing their dishonest and exploitative transgressions. This denunciation prompted, as Paine goes on to explain, an alliance between the local theocrats and the colonial rulers in order to conserve political power and prevent social disruptions that could be caused by Jesus' public reproofs.

The two instances of litotes employed in this paragraph further serve to diminish the religious import of Jesus as a historical figure and specifically of his teachings in order to represent him as a first and foremost political activist. When Paine writes that "it is not improbable that the Roman government might have some secret apprehensions of the effects of his doctrine," it is quite clear that Paine points to the political and social effects the said "doctrine" could lead its recipients to bring about, rather than the religious or spiritual ones they might experience upon incorporating it. In this manner, Paine suggest that Jesus' teachings prompted the ruling classes to perceive them as potentially disruptive to their power, so much so that they finally apprehended and executed him to contain the danger. The "doctrine" thus receives a fundamental re-evaluation at the hands of Paine, who presents the codified "excellent morality" hitherto read as of religious or spiritual import to constitute a politically relevant and potentially socially transformative set of ideas that threaten existing power relations.

Paine's view of Jesus' particular "doctrine" can serve to elucidate his general view on such codified sets of principles that vest themselves in religious or spiritual vocabularies. His reading of Jesus' teachings in primarily political views allows suggesting that such is his reading of all religious codified beliefs. Rather than taking them at face value with regard to their self-presentation as principally statements on the metaphysical reality of the world and the human being's position in it, Paine sees such sets of ideas as fundamentally located in specific historical contexts and implicated into particular power structures, with discernible agents operating behind them as potentially transformation-minded agitators or, in the contrary case, as reactionaries collaborating with hegemonic powers to uphold the status quo. While Jesus with his "doctrine" conforms to the former group of progressive politico-religious agents in Paine's construction, the Pharisees and their set of Old-Testament Biblical beliefs represent the latter group of collaborating reactionaries keen on preserving their own power, according to Paine's logic.

It is now interesting to inquire how Paine positions himself politically with the help of this representation of Jesus as he is about to undertake an inquest into religious beliefs and, in the course of it, to formulate his own. In this context, the first fact to notice is that the description of how the conviction of Jesus Christ by the Roman officials and the Pharisees proceeded, with its strongly political undertones, renders the figure of Jesus and the conditions he found himself in almost directly transferable to the time and conditions in which Paine experienced his American career, but also wrote *The Age of Reason* (Larkin 140). The quoted passage is ingeniously polyvalent in its referencing of two national and historical contexts biographically relevant to Paine, the first being Revolutionary America, the second post-Revolutionary France under the Jacobins.

To come back to the aforementioned second litotes employed in this paragraph at "neither is it improbable that Jesus Christ had in contemplation the delivery of the Jewish nation from the bondage of the Romans," its reading as a reference to a colonial struggle for liberation from an imposed power is probably more than merely a distantly insinuated one given the identity of the author. Especially Paine's own role in the American revolutionary struggle suggests that the American Revolution functions as a subtext in this instance. The fact that Paine used the phrase of "tributary bondage" several times in his *Crisis Papers* to describe the American colonies' situation under British rule (cf. Paine, *Crisis II* 69; Paine *Crisis* VIII 161) seems to further substantiate a reading of the American Revolution's presence in

this passage as likely. While the suggestion that Paine also had a correspondence between himself and Jesus in mind while writing this passage might only be warranted in the fashion of a humorous aside, even in the face of Paine's allegedly well-documented self-importance (e. g. Philp 46), it would indeed be accurate to suggest that "reformer and revolutionist" most certainly described his function during the American Revolution, at least in the eyes of the public exposed to his writings and public persona. Larkin reads this "parallel" between Paine and Jesus Christ as an intentional construction, elaborating on Paine's trial for seditious libel in England in the aftermath of the second part of *Rights of Man*, on the construction of Jesus as "of obscure parentage" much like Paine's own in other instances of the text, and on Jesus' general function of having "challenged an earlier understanding of God" (140, 141). Blakemore notes in another context that Paine's "emphasis on himself throughout his writings impinged on his obsessive self-representations and self-conceptions" (25), thus further substantiating that Paine and Jesus Christ are indeed meant to evoke each other in this description.

What might suggest a similar implicit presence of the French Revolution and more precisely the Jacobin rule is the description of the theocrats' behavior. Their alliance with the Roman colonizers who are clearly presenting impediments to the project of realizing "equality of man" shows significant homologies with the narratives presented by Jacobin representatives during the period of dechristianization. Especially the denotation of Jesus as a "revolutionist" justifies the supposition regarding an underlying presence of narratives related to dechristianization: An undertaking fundamentally directed against so-called counter-revolutionary and reactionary endeavors orchestrated by the adherents of the *Ancien Régime*, dechristianization operated on the suspicion that the clergy and counter-revolutionaries collaborated in order to hinder and reverse the progress of the Revolution, as explained in the last chapter. The reiteration of this narrative construction in Paine's rendition of the work and death of Jesus Christ seems to constitute a less overt presence of the French Revolution and the process of dechristianization than Paine's opening remarks, which so clearly locate the writing of *The Age of Reason* in the context of the theological occurrences of the years 1793 and 1794 in France.

Interestingly, not all of the references to Jesus Christ found in *The Age of Reason* cast him as a revolutionary and political activist. Before the already analyzed specification of Jesus' "morality" as a politically impactful ideology takes place, Paine presents Jesus as one

philosopher among many with comparable systems of thought. Once more, such alignments find themselves prefaced with assertions regarding the high respect and esteem in which the historical figure is held by the author:

> Nothing that is here said can apply, even with the most distant disrespect, to the real character of Jesus Christ. He was a virtuous and an amiable man. The morality that he preached and practised was of the most benevolent kind; and though similar systems of morality had been preached by Confucius, and by some of the Greek philosophers, many years before; by the Quakers since; and by many good men in all ages, it has not been exceeded by any. (Paine, *The Age* 669, 670)

Again, Paine seems to make a point of lauding Jesus, employing very positively charged adjectives such as "virtuous" and "amiable" to describe him. He also employs alliteration at "preached and practiced" to underline that this particular philosopher was indeed upright and conscientious in exemplifying his imperatives himself, not merely imposing them upon others. And another time an elative finds usage at "most benevolent" to praise these very imperatives formulated by Jesus. The attribution of conspicuously positive adjectives and characterizations seems to proceed in anticipation of criticisms with regard to another categorization that Paine bestows upon Jesus in this passage, namely that of "man." Together with the enumeration and insertion of Jesus into a line of human thinkers, this categorization seems irreverent enough, in the face of the contemporary prevalent Christian deification of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, to warrant the almost preemptory expression of admiration for the Biblical figure. Expressing himself in thus praising terms, Paine almost achieves to create the impression that he indeed places Jesus above the other mentioned figures and awards him some centrality – stating that his teaching "has not been exceeded by any" seems to intimate that very extolled position. Yet while this statement attests that Jesus has not been surpassed regarding the quality of his "morality," it does not attribute any superior status to Jesus either. Much rather, Jesus appears as a human thinker, aligned in thought and importance with others.

In this representation of Jesus, Paine corresponds very strongly with Emerson, who, however, is not as transfixed by the figure of Jesus as is Paine. Emerson mentions Jesus only on four occasions in his entire tract, and is never concerned with justifying Jesus' implication

into the text or, to put differently, with providing explanations for his enumeration alongside other philosophers. The following passage from the third chapter of Emerson's tract entitled "Beauty" is a case in point:

> Nature stretcheth out her arms to embrace man, only let his thoughts be of equal greatness. Willingly does she follow his steps with the rose and the violet, and bend her lines of grandeur and grace to the decoration of her darling child. Only let his thoughts be of equal scope, and the frame will suit the picture. A virtuous man is in unison with her works, and makes the central figure of the visible sphere. Homer, Pindar, Socrates, Phocion, associate themselves fitly in our memory with the geography and climate of Greece. The visible heavens and earth sympathize with Jesus. And in common life, whosoever has seen a person of powerful character and happy genius, will have remarked how easily he took all things along with him,—the persons, the opinions, and the day, and nature became ancillary to a man. (Emerson 17)

In this passage, the enumeration into which Jesus is inserted is not as linearly aligned as the one suggested in Paine. After all, the ancient Greek philosophers and Jesus are mentioned in different sentences and find themselves related to different natural environments in the course of Emerson's argument regarding the potential correspondence between the character of human beings and that of nature. Nonetheless, it has to be noted that the application of this argument to noted human beings such as the four Greek philosophers, and other historical figures in the sentences preceding this quoted passage, in the same manner as to Jesus, the presumed Son of God, without great regard for that difference in theological and cultural status, can point to a presumed equality of these enumerated elements.

But it is not merely this sequence that suggests Jesus' humanity in the quoted instance. Just as Paine does, Emerson uses the noun "man" to denote Jesus, albeit less directly and without the intention of purveying the humanity of that figure as the primary message of his communication. The fact that Emerson means the denomination of "man" to apply to Jesus is nonetheless unmistakably clear, as the structure of this passage implies increasing specificity. This means that the first sentences lay out a general principle, in which

Emerson postulates the character of the relation between an agent and nature in the way of a general tenet, for which he then adduces more concrete examples. After these examples, he again returns to greater abstraction by summarizing the import of the examples of the Greek philosophers and Jesus in more wide-ranging terms to return to the illustration of the aforementioned general principle. In so doing, he once again uses nouns that serve as hyperonyms for human beings, adding to the already mentioned "man" that of "person," which is, arguably, even less suited than the former to imply divinity in its rather mundane appeal. Even the modification "of powerful character" does not quite achieve rendering the noun "person" any less commonplace as it verges on a cliché.

Another depiction of Jesus' assumed humanity actualizes itself in the representation of his relation to the natural environment. What is interesting regarding this passage is the unquestioned greatness of nature in relation to the human beings mentioned, which Emerson describes here in very physically evocative ways. For example, nature is likened, certainly not in the most original turn of thought, to a maternal figure who "stretcheth out her arms to embrace man," who on his part is reduced to the size of a "darling child." At this point one might interleave the observation that the representation of Jesus as a child is a habitual element of Christian discourse and indeed one of the main aspects of Jesus' eschatological function. After all, only his status as the Son of God enables him to function as the savior by rendering his sacrifice meaningful and worthy enough to institute atonement for the sins committed by mankind. Thus, a significant homology between this Biblical representation of Jesus as Son of God and Emerson's depiction of Jesus as the child of nature, which, as stated before, is imbued with the divine, seems to be at play. The significant difference, however, is that the Bible never represented the concrete body of Jesus in direct interaction with the metaphorical body of the divine. The Bible depicts Jesus as interacting with human beings on a physical level, which results in his execution and initial admission of humanity with its concomitant bodily debility, but finally culminates in the physical triumph of his resurrection and thereby the conclusive statement of his divinity in relation to the mortal humans. The metaphorical glorification of his body as a "temple" to be rebuilt in three days in the allegory thus further aggrandizes Jesus physically in relation to the human beings that he is surrounded by (cf. *New King James Version*, John 2. 19-22). In Emerson, however, the physical relation between the natural sphere, imbued with the divine, and the human being receives central attention and is implied to refer to Jesus, as

well. This physical relationship is symbolized by the maternal "embrace." Even the act of "sympathiz[ing]" ascribed to "[t]he visible heavens and earth" as cumulative representatives of nature and the divine in relation to Jesus can be read as a parental gesture of support. Jesus' status as child, in this manner, humanizes him in rendering him smaller in relation to the sphere of nature and not conspicuously different in physical terms from the bodies of the enumerated Greek philosophers.

After this examination of the presence and specific rendition of Deist and Unitarian tenets, such as the interaction of the godhead with the material universe, the didactic purpose of this interaction, and the representation of Jesus Christ as human, it is useful to once again return to a consideration of the political signification of such Deist and Unitarian representations of the divine in different kinds of texts. As established above, an affiliation between Deist thought and political opposition has been well documented, and Deist and Unitarian postulations have also significantly impacted hegemonic constructions of civil religion in the Early Republic. A brief examination of further sources, presented in the following, fosters a more complete understanding of the uses of especially Deist vocabularies to engage chiefly political concepts and construct according narratives. Such a brief investigation can also allow for a better appreciation of the divergences that are characteristic of Paine's and Emerson's use of the same vocabularies to more hegemonic uses thereof. Excerpts from Alexis de Tocqueville's 1835 Democracy in America and Hannah Arendt's 1963 On Revolution, both dedicated to the evaluation of political processes and the calibration of democratic structures in the US, serve as sources in this instance.

The following excerpt from Alexis de Tocqueville's seminal *Democracy in America* is a peculiar case in point in its rendition of the process of democratization around the world in distinctly astronomical terms. On the basis of the following passage from Tocqueville's introduction to the mentioned work, I argue that the fusion of Deist and political conceptions facilitated a construction of political history along five lines, which I identify as derivation, continuity, inclusion, obfuscation, and anthropomorphization. This construction, however, while to some extent echoed in both Paine and Emerson, is also abandoned by the two authors. The French observer of antebellum America traces the historical developments of politics in both Europe and the United States and finds himself supported in the impression that the implementation of democratic systems is the inevitable *telos* of both political spaces and societies. Tocqueville resorts to a seemingly Deist vocabulary in

explaining his view on this development towards democracy and its perceived inevitability. Tying his impressions in this regard to the motivations and underpinnings of his study presented in *Democracy in America*, he writes:

> The whole book which is here offered to the public has been written under the impression of a kind of religious dread produced in the author's mind by the contemplation of so irresistible a revolution, which has advanced for centuries in spite of such amazing obstacles, and which is still proceeding in the midst of the ruins it has made. It is not necessary that God himself should speak in order to disclose to us the unquestionable signs of His will; we can discern them in the habitual course of nature, and in the invariable tendency of events: I know, without a special revelation, that the planets move in the orbits traced by the Creator's finger. If the men of our time were led by attentive observation and by sincere reflection to acknowledge that the gradual and progressive development of social equality is at once past and future of their history, this solitary truth would confer the sacred character of a Divine decree upon the change. To attempt to check democracy would be in that case to resist the will of God; and the nations would then be constrained to make the best of the social lot awarded to them by Providence. (Tocqueville 7)

This entire passage seems to be predicated on the supposition that historical events are derivative phenomena of natural, and ultimately supernatural, ones and therefore subordinate in relevance and explanatory power to their actual source phenomena. The according superior status of the latter is given expression to by frequent invocations of what can be termed an experience of the sublime in a peculiar mixture of terror and beauty (cf. Des Pres 137), in this particular instance expressed as a "religious dread." The adjective in this term points towards the supernatural semantic sphere as the source for Tocqueville's subsequent explanation of democratic developments around the world known to him. The noun seems to connote a feeling of terror when confronted with the sublime, which is once again tied to the spheres of majestic greatness most often connoted with the presence of the divine or with impressive sights of nature. Both, the divine and natural phenomena are about to be invoked in the quoted passage of Tocqueville's text.

Apart from the conception of history as derivation, the employment of Deist and idealist vocabularies allows for a conception of history as marked by continuity, as exemplified in this passage by Tocqueville. In the portion of the quote analyzed so far, the use of temporal aspect and other temporal markers is particularly interesting. Tocqueville describes the progress of democracy with first, as mentioned, the present perfect form of "has advanced," which establishes the impression of uninterrupted continuity from a point in the past into the present of the moment of writing. Adding the temporal adverbial phrase of "for centuries," Tocqueville engages in a disputable narration of history ostensibly geared towards augmenting a notion of continuity in the very middle of which both the author and his contemporary readers are alluded to be located. The present progressive form of "is still proceeding" might seem superfluous given the fact that the preceding present perfect also refers to the present state of democratic progress at least to some degree. Again, what might be read as a redundant reference to the process of democratic development at the time of writing once again enhances and emphasizes the notion of continuity. The second important present perfect form appearing in this segment is "it has made," which refers to the object "ruins" and references, as already described, the different kinds of chaotic circumstances and instances of destruction that often accompany processes of political change toward democratization. Interestingly, Tocqueville grammatically juxtaposes the process of the advent of democracy itself with the concomitant chaos and destruction mentioned. Continuity in Tocqueville's analysis, it therefore seems, is not merely the marker of the positively represented development towards democracy as such, but also of the more negatively connoted disruptions that this development entails. This further implies that for Tocqueville, democracy and disruption are intricately linked to each other, which not only the narrative he constructs, but also the temporal forms that he employs seem to suggest.

What immediately follows these remarks on the progress towards democracy around the world and in France is a reference to the divine that at first sight does not appear to stand in stringent relation with Tocqueville's text up to this point. At first, Tocqueville creates the impression that when he refers to the deity and speaks of "the unquestionable signs of His will," he aims at finding a supernaturally or metaphysically informed vocabulary to once again vest his notion of the inevitable nature of democratic development in engaging words. After all, the evocation of the sublime in the previous sentences does resonate well with notions of the divine and the supernaturally powerful. When Tocqueville

contends that a direct, verbal announcement of divine intention is not required, he can be understood to point to the previous elaboration on the inevitability of democracy in the course of history, which then seems to constitute an expression of that very divine will. The second part of this sentence, however, introduces a new component that does not seem to have informed Tocqueville's contentions so far, namely a distinctively Deist conception of the purpose of nature. Rather than the course of history, to which he has been referring up to this point, it is the "habitual course of nature" as well as the "invariable tendency of events" that Tocqueville now postulates to be expressive of divine intentions. Surely, the noun "events" can be read to refer to the very historical occurrences that Tocqueville recounts in the previous paragraphs, citing them as indicators for the eventual inevitability of democracy. The fact that this statement is preceded and followed by references to "nature" and natural, more precisely astronomical phenomena, however, supersedes the potential reference to history to some extent and redirects the reader's attention to the Deist argument and its concomitant focus on the natural sphere.

One further feature facilitated by the fusion of vocabularies of deism and idealism with those of politics and history is the invocation of a fundamental inclusion of the imagined audience into the argument. This is mainly achieved by invoking the aforementioned characteristic of Deistic inquiry into the metaphysical truth underlying the material world by means of engaging the sensory faculties presumably available to every individual. Tocqueville states that a "special revelation" is not necessary for him to engage in certain astronomical observations, interpreting them on the basis of metaphysical premises. One such metaphysical premise is that the observable movement of the planets is "traced by the Creator's finger." In other words, Tocqueville reiterates the Deist postulate that especially astronomical phenomena are the closest approximation to witnessing the presence of divine will in the natural world. Several factors tie Tocqueville's Deist passage in the quoted instance to Paine's brand of scientific Deism, of which the basic privileging of astronomical occurrences as indicative of divine will is the most general. A more specific parallel is the apparent disparaging of "revelation." Both, Paine and Tocqueville have a rather negative view of the concept of "revelation" and its implications. Tocqueville's negative attitude towards this concept can be said to remain implicit and expressed mainly through the statement that "without a special revelation§ knowledge about the natural world can be acquired, arguably through scientific observation, although Tocqueville himself

does not specify the methods that enable his acquisition of knowledge. While the formulation employed is not harshly disapproving, a clear relegation of the concept of "revelation" takes place and the individual's own capacity to observe is privileged. Paine devotes a more vigorously presented critique to the concept of "revelation."

Another factor facilitated by the fusion of Deist and political vocabularies is the feature of anthropomorphization when it comes to discussing the characteristics of the sphere of the supernatural and the divine. This anthropomorphization of the godhead also forms the second apparent similarity between Pain and Tocqueville. Tocqueville refers to "the Creator's finger" and thus represents the deity to be akin to the human being in form. Paine, as said, equates the godhead with an "Almighty lecturer" (*The Age* 694), thereby endowing the godhead metaphorically with a human shape. These instances of anthropomorphization are, of course, not particular to these two examples of Deist thought, as the Christian notion of most denominations is informed by the postulation that the human being is created in the image of the divine Creator. It is thus important to note that the attention given to the discursive practice of anthropomorphizing the deity in Tocqueville and Paine in this instance was not meant to construct them as fundamentally deviating from the postulations of the Christian faith. Much rather, the anthropomorphization of the deity as carried out by both Tocqueville and Paine is setting their notions of the divine apart from those of Emerson, who prefers to maintain a rather more diffuse and less concrete concept of the deity. In spite of Emerson's frequent use of personification when it comes to explaining certain functions and appearances of the divine, Emerson refrains from representing the divine as endowed with a human body. Emerson's purpose of writing was not to defend a thesis and to convince readers of his rightness, but rather to freely discuss a topic of philosophical and religious import whose political message was not at all designed to be the dominating feature of the text. Paine's *The Age of Reason* on the other hand was meant to be contentious and to convince readers of the rightness of its claims and arguments from the outset of its writing. It can well be argued that Paine therefore depended on metaphors and similes that would render his ideas regarding the godhead easier to understand for his prospective readership, and that anthropomorphization is an adequate tool of achieving this effect.

In spite of this discursive inclusion of the audience, an important feature of the derivative conception of history is the obfuscation of the material gradients of agency that

lead to political and ultimately historical changes. Tocqueville identifies the object that induces such powerful feelings of being exposed to the effect of the sublime in him as "so irresistible a revolution." The adjective in this case increases the impression of sublime power by invoking the powerlessness of the beholder in the face of the process of the "revolution." Tocqueville thereby obfuscates the agents of the changes he deals with and relegates agency away from the human or political parties involved to another agent not yet clearly identified, but intimated to be located in the sphere of the supernatural. While Tocqueville does not undertake a direct and expressed personification of the noun and rather abstract political concept of "revolution," it is still this process itself rather than the human beings that appear as endowed with political agency in Tocqueville's description.

The present perfect of "has advanced" as well as the modified present progressive of "is still proceeding" (Tocqueville 7) both present the change towards democracy as the agent, grammatically and politically, of what Tocqueville represents as progress. Tocqueville's pointing towards the difficulties and conflicts by which this progress has been marked serves to once again underline the sublime and superhumanly powerful nature of the process: While the adjective "amazing" modifies the adversity that was meant to impede the development of democracy, its connotation of awe and overpowering, intimidating impressions are easily transferred on the item that succeeded in overcoming these very adversities or "obstacles." Tocqueville's choice of metaphor in referring to the dismantling of previous political systems and social structures under the advent of democracy is likewise adding to both impressions of agency and power. When he writes that the process of democratization around the world presses on "in the midst of the ruins it has made" (ibid.) destructive and therefore intimidating and fear-inducing sentiments are most likely to be invoked in the reader.

The employment of planetary and partly Deist vocabularies to express political events does not necessarily oblige the resultant text to consider political events as derivatives of metaphysical phenomena, conditioning a narrative construction of presumed historical continuity hinging on the anthropomorphization of these processes and obfuscating the actual agents provoking and operating in them, while suggesting the obvious nature of everything stated. The contrary can be achieved. While it might seem disparate to read Tocqueville against a 20th-century philosopher, who is also not an avowed Deist, when it comes to approaching the expressive potentials of Deist vocabularies, Hannah Arendt's *On*

Revolution still provides a very worthwhile illustration of how an invocation of astronomical events can actually increase one's awareness of particular political agents and material conditions. In her seminal comparative analysis of the American and French Revolutions, Arendt too makes recourse to the astronomical semantic sphere out of which several political terms are taken, most notably that of "revolution." Interestingly, she does not iterate the very common explanation of why this metaphor is seen as auspicious, namely because it used to express the prevalent 18th-century notion of a political revolution restoring a previous condition deemed more desirable than the present one. Instead, she sees the appropriateness of the metaphor in its reference to the inexorable nature of certain events in history, but refers this inexorableness to very material conditions and agents:

> The necessity of historical processes, originally seen in the image of the revolving, lawful, and necessary motion of the heavenly bodies, found its powerful counterpart in the recurring necessity to which all human life is subject. When this had happened, and it happened when the poor, driven by the needs of their bodies, burst on to the scene of the French Revolution, the astronomic metaphor so plausibly apposite to the sempiternal change, the ups and downs of human destiny, lost its old connotations, and acquired the biological imagery which underlies and pervades the organic and social theories of history, which all have in common that they see a multitude – the factual plurality of a nation or a people or society – in the image of one supernatural body driven by one superhuman, irresistible "general will". (Arendt 59, 60)

The element that comes to the attention first upon reading the passage is that in contrast to Tocqueville, the agents involved in the political processes referenced are not obfuscated but highlighted with the aid of vocabulary pertaining to the semantic sphere of astronomy. Arendt's analysis of the French Revolution and the concomitant re-evaluation of the astronomical metaphor of "revolution" are particularly incisive on account of their focus on the aspect of the body and its needs. This aspect of bodily need finds itself elevated to the determining factor of political change in her consideration of French revolutionary events. Indeed, the compelling nature and sheer force of bodily needs are equated with the forces at play in astronomical phenomena in her evaluation of the term "revolution." Arendt

thereby also manages to create a relation between the human body and the abstract construct of the "general will" so crucial to political thought during the French Revolution. More precisely, she offers an explanation of the abstract notion in terms of human biological necessities. The translation of the concept of the "general will" into bodily terms offers an effective deconstruction of the very "superhuman" and "irresistible" character of the said "general will" by referring it back to the very human, as it were, very particular will of an individual based on world experience and the corresponding necessities and desires that shape this world experience. This translation thereby renders the "multitude" and "the factual plurality," on which notions Arendt identifies the concept of the "general will" to be based, more specifically as the "multitude" or "plurality" of discrete, individual human bodies trying to satisfy a crucial bodily need, that of nutrition in this example. The addition of individual needs perceived by all living bodies then becomes the forceful, compelling factor in political processes, likened by Arendt in impact and inevitability to the forces at play in structuring astronomical occurrences. She thereby manages to establish a relationship between the operations of the particular agents of the revolution and the force of the astronomical phenomenon, using the metaphorical import of the relation to put the agents into the center of her consideration. She thus once again explicates what has been pointed out to distinguish the political thought introduced by the French Revolution, namely that the citizen and the human being seize to be notions divorced from each other during revolutionary processes (cf. Prien 15).

This explanation of the revolutionary process in France is particularly interesting when contrasted with the conception of bodily processes in rhizomatic panopticism and its relation to impactful political agency. What stands out in Arendt's analysis of bodily needs and their impact on political events is her focus on "the recurring necessity to which all human life is subjected." She does not specify which needs precisely she subsumes under this heading. Her reference to "the life process which permeates our bodies and keeps them in a constant state of a change whose movements are automatic, independent of our own activities, and irresistible" (Arendt 59) supports the assumption that the most fundamental processes of sustaining life or ensuring survival are at the center of her considerations. The same applies to her mention of poverty as an important factor during the phase that lead up to the revolutionary events of 1789. "[P]overty," writes Arendt, "is abject because it puts men under the absolute dictate of necessity" (Arendt 60). In spite of the different direction

of her argument, the consideration of human physical necessities in their impact on political decisions and social structures is importance in the context of the thesis presented here. The main reason for its importance is that Arendt's argument justifies the claim that the crucial element for a political agent is a body of whose necessities the political agent is aware and which prompt the political agent to strive for very particular political and social changes to accommodate those necessities, the summation of which is tantamount to the "general will" in a society. These necessities she seems to identify as those most basic to any human being's survival. A political system characterized by rhizomatic panopticism puts the body of the political agent into the center of consideration, too. It is a bodily process that both Paine set as the precondition for the impactful and effective participation in political processes. This bodily process, as said, is that of vision. A very telling divergence from Arendt's analysis and her identification of physical need as the chief characteristic of the revolutionary agent is the fact that Paine and Emerson identify a particular ability as such a chief characteristic. Clearly, this divergence renders Paine and Emerson's definition of a political agent far more exclusive: While Arendt referred to a cluster of factors she saw as characterizing every human being's life, namely the necessities whose accommodation ensures survival in practice, Paine and Emerson refer to an ability which in practice not every human being possesses.

These observations of how Deist tenets can be used to convey political meanings that concern democratization, revolution, and the implication of different actors into these processes serves as another background for the inquiry into *The Age of Reason* and *Nature* as tracts that project a specific political ideal. As especially the last two thematic chapters demonstrate, Paine and Emerson share Arendt's awareness of the importance of the human body as the origin and predication of political action in processes of social transformation and also consolidation. Yet as the first two chapters also reveal, Paine and Emerson also coincide, to some extent, with Tocqueville in the points of derivation and anthropomorphization, while somewhat deviating from him in the points of obfuscation, continuity, and inclusion. In that manner, the present analysis explicates how the use of Deist vocabularies allows Paine and Emerson to undertake the said projection of an ideal democracy along the structural parameters of rhizomatic panopticism. As grows evident in the course of the investigation, Deist vocabularies become constitutive of a discourse of democracy as rhizomatic panopticism.

6. The Gaze

The present chapter examines the normative constructions of the gaze and corresponding normative representations of vision in Paine's *The Age of Reason* and Emerson's *Nature*. I pay attention to those characteristics of the gaze which render it both rhizomatic and panoptic in the descriptions of both authors. I first trace the manner in which the gaze functions as the main expression of connectivity between the constitutive elements of the natural sphere in both texts. In the second section, I go on to examine the depiction of such a connecting vision as fundamentally reciprocal. This chapter's final section subsequently focuses on the mediation and negotiation of the ideal of equality between the constitutive elements via the construction of the rhizomatically panoptic gaze.

Connectivity

Both authors use similar strategies to highlight the importance of connectivity between different elements of any structural arrangement, the chief of which consists of the depiction of visual perception in, at its most general, positive terms, or as a capability with an ulterior benefit that the authors then explicate. By way of contrast, the absence of such a visual connection between these respective elements is represented as a state in need of amends. The elevation of sight and the visual connection with one's surroundings that it fosters to a principle capable of explaining the motivation behind creation is one specific instance of this strategy and decisively determines Paine's argument in *The Age of Reason*. Elaborating on the didactic mission of God in his function of the "Almighty lecturer" (Paine 694), Paine asks the following:

> Of what use is it, unless it be to teach man something, that his eye is endowed with the power of beholding, to an incomprehensible distance, an immensity of worlds revolving in the ocean of space? Or of what use is it that this immensity of worlds is visible to man? What has man to do with the Pleiades, with Orion, with Sirius, with the star he calls the north star, with the moving orbs he has named Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, and Mercury, if no uses are to follow from their being visible? A less power of vision would have been sufficient for man, if the immensity he now possesses were given only to waste itself, as it were, on an immense desart (sic!) of space glittering with shows. (*The Age* 695)

Paine elevates the capability of exercising vision to the leading experience determining his perception of the world and his metaphysical assumptions. Particularly interesting is the function which Paine constructs the capability of exercising vision to have in this context: The mere fact that the individual can visually perceive objects that are located at an "incomprehensible distance" presupposes, as Paine gives to understand, that there must exist a very specific and purposeful relation between the individual and those objects. This specific relationship is expressed as being chiefly one of "use," which operates as an opposite to "waste." To rephrase, the sole fact that objects are visible to the sighted human being suggests, according to Paine, that there must exist a connection between that human being and the perceived object that in its purpose and function supersedes mere vision or visibility. Vision thus mediates a connection that goes beyond itself, but remains the chief signifier thereof. In that manner, vision becomes quasi synonymous with connection.

Referring to this passage, Walter Woll writes regarding Paine's conception of the divine that "[t]o his mind, God not only created the universe with its different worlds, which, to Paine, were identical with the planets, he was even ready to give away a share of his knowledge" (155). Evidently, this construction of the relationship between the human being endowed with "the power of beholding" or the "power of vision" (Paine, *The Age* 695) and the far-away objects upon which this power is exercised follows an expressly Deist logic: Paine reiterates the Deist tenet that the heavenly bodies and astronomical phenomena are visible from the vantage point of the human being located in his terrestrial existence in order to foster an understanding of the principles and laws that determine natural processes, which in their turn explicate divine provisions to the human being as the deity is only to be accessed via its manifestation in the natural sphere. This Deist principle finds expression in Paine's conditional construction of the universe as it is visible and the didactic purpose conditioning and motivating its visibility. This grows clear when Paine formulates the rhetorical question "[o]f what use is it, unless it be to teach man something […]?"(*The Age* 695). It is of special importance, however, that it is the very visibility of the universe and the astronomical bodies that it contains that lead Paine to reiterate the Deist tenet: The didactic purpose is not the first link in the chain of reasoning which leads to an imperative of scientific observation in order to arrive at a better understanding of the deity. Much rather, vision and visibility are the first elements that lead Paine to project unto these features a

purpose beyond themselves, namely the purpose of preconditioning and facilitating learning about the natural sphere and, concomitantly, about the godhead. Vision as the capability of the human being and visibility as the characteristic of material objects are the primary features that induce Paine to further semanticize this kind of connectivity between sighted human beings and the material world surrounding them.

Emerson, too, postulates the natural sphere in general, and astronomical phenomena in particular, to be imbued with a distinctly didactic purpose. However, the chiefly Deist notion he espouses on this matter does not vest itself in distinctly Deist formulations. Much rather, Emerson uses theologically less specific vocabularies of admiration, while not shirking references to the deity and its supreme authority. In this vein, the proposed affinity between a natural phenomenon and the relations of individuals to appear first in *Nature* is that of encouraged replication: "Nature" in its denotative, "common sense" (Emerson 8) is constructed as an ideal to be finally embodied by the other implied components of this definition, namely by "all other men" (ibid.). This grows evident when considering that the first description pertaining to the broadly defined concept refers to a particular and rather common natural phenomenon, namely the nightly sky, which is depicted in its impact on the individual observer and his relation to his environs:

> I am not solitary whilst I read and write, though nobody is with me. But if a man would be alone, let him look at the stars. The rays that come from those heavenly worlds, will separate between him and what he touches. One might think the atmosphere was made transparent with this design, to give man, in the heavenly bodies, the perpetual presence of the sublime. Seen in the streets of cities, how great they are! If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore; and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown! But every night come out these envoys of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile. (Emerson 9)

In this passage, the ideal, natural sphere's asserted superiority in relation to the beholder's situation is redundantly marked. For example, the narrator employs a hyperbolic conditional construction invoking a scenario in which the stars are visible only "one night in a thousand years" to highlight the outstanding meaning of this natural occurrence. He further presents

the supposition that the air's translucence has the sole end of facilitating the beholder's gaze onto the stars, making him aware of the "sublime" or, expressed differently, the unsurpassable and noble. This representation indicates the implicit directive of replication of the ideal. Directed at the readers and inducing them to encourage the individual's observation, the imperative presents the required activity, namely the exercise of the gaze, to grasp the essence of the ideal and experience its positive impact as a consequence.

The observation's result described first is the observer's altered relation to his material surroundings: The beams of light sent out from the stars and perceived by the onlooker "separate between him and what he touches." Since the verbalized motivation of beholding the sky at night is to achieve by "a gesture of philosophical seriousness" (Dolan, *Emerson's Liberalism* 80) a state of veritable solitude, the separation effectuated by the stars' light spoken of in this passage can be read as a condition of detachment from the social sphere, necessary for critical reflection and learning from the ideal. However, understanding the verb "to separate" in its meaning of "to occupy a position between" ("separate"), the stars' "rays" can be read to function as mediators between the beholder and his environment. In other words, the light emitted by the stars and noticed by the observer transforms, rather than curtails, his connection to his material context. The specific kind of the transformation is pointed towards by referring to the stars as "heavenly worlds" metaphorically and, further, by likening their array to "the city of God" (Emerson 9). Both these references to "worlds" and "city," as general terms for spheres inhabited and organized by humans, indicate the presence of a particular structure and civic arrangement. In this function of a signifier of the presence of sociopolitical structures, Emerson's "city of God" is reminiscent of Paine's "society of worlds" (*The Age* 710), a term he uses to describe the solar system and the visible stars later on and to which he also ascribes the purpose of "instruction" (ibid.). Since the adjective "heavenly" (Emerson 9) not only indicates the stars' location, but primarily carries the religious connotations of the exemplary, just as the reference to God designates the authoritative, the implied civic arrangements exemplified by the star's organization are presented as mandating to follow their example. To sum up the narrator's description of the observer's relation to the nightly sky, two elements are thus of importance: First, the nightly sky represents an ideal to be replicated as far as the connection between the individual and his material environs as well as an ideal structure of

political arrangement are concerned; second, this ideal can only be known and reproduced by actualizing the faculty of the gaze.

While not as explicitly as Paine proceeds, Emerson too marks the exemplary character of the natural and particularly the astronomical sphere. However, he does not relate its didactic role, as Paine does, in a causative manner to its very visibility. For Paine, the instructive mode is secondary to the feature of visibility as well as the capability of vision and in many ways is consciously projected onto it. For Emerson, on the other hand, visibility is not antecedent to the projection of a didactic purpose on the natural sphere. In contrast to Paine, Emerson seems altogether unaware of the process of his own projection of purpose onto the natural sphere. While both authors cast vision as the chief signifier of a vital relation between elements within a system, Paine sees the relation or connection as primary and then deduces from it a specific purpose, while Emerson sees both, visibility and vision on the one hand and the status of nature as an ideal intended to be emulated as not related by strict causality.

I put forward that this awareness of a self-conscious projection of purpose on already existing relations is an indicator of the self-reflexive mode of Paine's deliberations on the institution of political systems and corresponding dominant narratives. Rather than postulating the purpose as a fact, he marks it as the result of his deductive thought process, thus implicitly conceding its contingent and circumscribed character. This cannot be said of Emerson, who seems more comfortable with the presentation of his observations in terms of universal truths. I relate this distinction in presentations of the natural sphere to a distinction in the conceptualization of human sociopolitical associations. Paine represents the pre-existing relation as primary, while the ideal is a secondary and even, to some extent, a consciously projected construct growing out of the necessity to imbue the pre-existing relationships with meaning. The representation of the ideal is a conscious effort, conspicuously based on particular points of view. In Emerson's case, however, relations and the ideal space seem coexistent, and to acquire knowledge of the ideal, existing relations have to be momentarily cast aside to foster the necessary state of being "solitary" (Emerson 9). In that manner, the ideal even acquires ascendance over existing relations. Emerson's guiding question of "to what end is nature?" (Emerson 7), which prefaces the tract, is not conditional upon the acknowledgement of a primacy of relations or connections. Much rather, the ideal operates as an eternal presence that stores answers to the human being's

questions. When Emerson notes that "[w]e must trust the perfection of the creation so far, as to believe that whatever curiosity the order of things has awakened in our minds, the order of things can satisfy" (Emerson 7), his assumption regarding the self-evident character of nature's "perfection" grows clear. Rather than regarding this assumption as one such, or as the product of a human necessity, Emerson constructs nature's "perfection" and therefore instructive function as a pre-existing fact to the human being's inquiry. Paine, to put it another way, is thus more aware of the narrative and constructed character of any ideal, even the one he sets out to propose himself. The narrative presenting that ideal is therefore in need of some logical justification, presented in the form of a logical deduction. Emerson, however, is not in need of justifying that a particular structural organization is an ideal.

I understand this difference chiefly in terms of the different ideological markers that determined both texts' respective historical contexts. Paine understood social structures as consciously created in order to make sense of already existing relations and also in order to consciously bring particular kinds of order to those relations. Certainly, the revolutionary circumstances Paine witnessed in both America and France honed his understanding of the precarious character of ideals as contingent constructs in need of constant justification in order to persevere. Emerson, on the other hand, wrote in a historical and national context chiefly marked by the increasingly consolidating hegemonic narrative of the desirability and ascendance of a particular kind of sociopolitical structure, namely democracy. In this manner, reading across *The Age of Reason* and *Nature* with a concern for the representations and uses of the gaze can yield a better understanding of its potential for explicating conceptions of the interdependence between existing sociopolitical connections and the conscious imposition of both hegemonic and oppositional narratives upon them in order to semanticize them.

In the same vein, another feature of relations and connections to which Paine calls attention in a self-referential manner, more so than Emerson, is that of the motivation behind them. Paine does so by drawing on the Deist tenet of the didactic imperative patent in the natural sphere: The concern that Paine repeatedly displays when it comes to dissertating on the topic of the visibility of astronomical phenomena is the possibility of a lack of motive or purpose behind it. Paine rules out this possibility as he equates a lack of purpose with "waste," both of the "immensity of worlds" (*The Age* 695) on the plane of

matter and of the "power of vision" (ibid.) on the plane of human physical capacity. This denial of the futility of vision and the visibility of astronomical phenomena receives further attention when Paine explains in even more specifically Deist terms the didactic purpose of both:

> It is only by contemplating what he calls the starry heavens, as the book and school of science, that he discovers any use in their being visible to him, or any advantage resulting from his immensity of vision. But when he contemplates the subject in this light, he sees an additional motive for saying that nothing was made in vain; for in vain would be this power of vision if it taught man nothing. (Paine, *The Age* 695)

As stated before and as once again grows patent in this passage, Paine insists that the mere visibility of astronomical phenomena and the human being's capacity of sight are indicative of the didactic purpose of the visible structural features of the universe. Therefore, observing such phenomena becomes tantamount to reading in the Creator's "book […] of science." Assuming that this didactic, or in fact any other purpose is absent from the capacity of vision and the property of visibility is to negate the evident and compelling implication of vision and visibility according to Paine. This strong tie between processes of vision and the concepts of motivation or purpose allow for another specification with regard to the characteristics of the particular kind of vision constructed in this instance: It predisposes the sighted subject toward a reflection concerning the motivation of processes and also of other perceived entities, objects, and phenomena. Just as structures do, motivations and rationales informing the establishment of connections, according to Paine, also require analytical attention and critical reflection. This requirement, once again, extends to both the already dominant and his own motivations, as he poses the question regarding the possibility of the absence of such in an unprompted and voluntary manner. The contingency of the construction and identification of rationales once again comes to the forefront and marks the self-reflexive manner of Paine's thought on the creation of structures in general. Rather than allegedly self-explanatory constructs, they appear as in constant need of justification and analytical reflection.

To return to the texts, it is necessary to once again call to mind that the mere presence of vision and visibility condition the presence of an important and meaningful connection according to Paine, and that, in addition, this connection can be actualized with

objects, entities, and phenomena that seem disparate, overpowering, and multitudinous. In other words, rather than being limited to objects that resemble the observers and put them at ease in terms of shape, scale, and number, the vision described by Paine establishes connections between a veritable multiplicity of markedly variegated objects, entities, and phenomena seemingly erratically arranged across a vast and extensive space. While it is the reciprocity of the gaze, analyzed further below, that renders this described quality of vision truly rhizomatic, even the as of now un-reciprocated vector of vision is not one-directional, but rather acknowledges the multi-centered structure of the space which it engages into a relation. This variegated character of the phenomena with which Paine's construction of vision establishes connections is expressed in the rhetorical question which consists roughly of an enumeration of constellations of stars and planets visible to the individual: "What has man to do with the Pleiades, with Orion, with Sirius, with the star he calls the north star, with the moving orbs he has named Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, and Mercury, if no uses are to follow from their being visible?" (Paine, *The Age* 695).

A sense of wonder and sincere amazement exceeding that of a usual rhetorical question seems to inform the one at hand. The emphatic inquiry as to the purpose of the relation that the author establishes to exist between sighted human beings and the astronomical constellations and objects seems to retrieve its sense of astonishment from the very multiplicity and variegated character of the visible phenomena. The enumeration enhances this sense of amazement as well as the sense of multiplicity by employing the preposition "with" in front of every element of the enumeration of the constellations of stars. Paine ceases to preface every enumerated element in this manner only when he comes to the meronymic sequence of planets, while the names of the constellations are all accompanied by the preposition. Again, Paine seems to underline the fact that the gaze of the observer establishes a connection with multiplicity, and, to be more precise, with several of such multiplicities: While the planets are not highlighted by virtue of the preposition's prefacing of every enumerated element, the constellations, themselves multiplicities of stars arbitrarily grouped into allegedly unified structures, are indeed made conspicuous in that manner. In this way, the combination of several astronomical bodies into one structure, subsumed under one name, comes to the forefront of the consideration, but does not entirely overshadow the sequence of planets, which forms a contrast. Paine thus manages to underline not simply the multiplicity of objects, entities, and phenomena to which the

sighted individual's gaze goes out and with which it forms a connection, but also the multiplicity of structures in which these bodies find arrangement. The connectivity thus constructed to be mediated by vision is not merely relating visible objects with each other, but draws distinct attention to and is mindful of the specific spatial structures into which these objects find themselves implicated. Here, the rhizomatic character of the construction of space comes to the foreground once again, for it is the heterogeneity that marks the allegedly unified spatial structure of the sky at night that Paine emphasizes. The fact that this unity can be seen as a mindful construction self-consciously undertaken by the beholder resonates with Thomas Lange's observations regarding the overlaps between Deleuze and Nietzsche on the issue of multiplicity and difference: Paine intimates the said unity to be conditioned and constructed with clear and power-conscious as well as power-driven motivations, with the focus on multiplicity and heterogeneity of the constituent elements always retaining a prominent position in the description and conception of the space one is beholding (cf. Lange 56, 57).[3]

Coming back to Emerson, one can note that the structural feature of multiplicity is also present in the passage quoted above. The representation of nature as an ideal model exemplifying material and political relations rests on its construction as a rhizomatic space, governed by the principles of multiplicity and heterogeneity. Although in the passage analyzed the nightly sky's ideal structure is not explicitly described by the narrator, it is still accessible to the reader by means of inferring from the personal experience of the general appearance of the natural phenomenon at hand. The structure most likely to come to mind when thinking of this phenomenon which both Paine and Emerson describe is that of a polycentric area, lacking a main midpoint or a visible, rigid, hierarchical arrangement. Instead, the large quantity of visible stars strikes the beholder, wherefore the narrator, by means of an association of images, invokes the notion of multiplicity.

The principle of multiplicity, so central to both Paine's and Emerson's constructions of the natural sphere qua instructive force, is a characteristic of the rhizome according to Deleuze and Guattari, since

[3] As Lange puts it in the German original, "Das Viele rückt in den Vordergrund. Erst die Multiplizität läßt sich zur Einheit zusammenfassen. Die Einheit des Vielen ist stets nur Organisation unter dem kurzandauernden Obsiegen vorherrschender Machtwillen. So betrachtet kann es *die* Einheit nicht geben, sondern immer nur sich ständig ändernde Einheiten" (57, emphasis in the original).

> it is only when the multiple is effectively treated as a substantive, "multiplicity," that it ceases to have any relation to the One as subject or object, natural or spiritual reality, image and world. Multiplicities are rhizomatic, and expose arborescent pseudo-multiplicities for what they are. There is no unity to serve as a pivot in the object, or to divide in the subject. There is not even the unity to abort in the object or "return" in the subject. […] (*A Thousand Plateaus* 7)

As Deleuze and Guattari explain, the multiplicity implies a conception of any entity as a mutable array of intensities rather than a unified whole. The absence of a "unity to serve as a pivot" indicates the initial configuration of rhizomatic multiplicities as not centered around a particular category, and thus non-hierarchical, granted the fact that hierarchies may develop on account of the rhizome's dynamic alterability (ibid. 21). In contrast to the centered and, therefore, potentially hierarchical arborescent structure, the rhizome remains non-centered, which implies a detachment from "natural or spiritual reality, image and world," or put differently, from the sphere of things whose definition is contingent upon their material and conceptual integrity. In this manner, the concept of multiplicity radically supersedes the individual, unified entity to the point of obliteration, constituting itself as a sphere of dynamic negotiation.

In contrast to Paine, Emerson's invocation of structures created by connection as phenomena to be consciously perceived and evaluated may seem less explicit, which is certainly accurate looking at the passage quoted above. Emerson, indeed, does not utilize the astronomical sphere to explicate an awareness of specific structures such as multiplicity. In other instances of descriptions of the surroundings, however, he comes close to Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on the importance of multiplicity. While Emerson does not assume equally radical positions in *Nature*, he makes similar statements about the character of the natural sphere:

> When I behold a rich landscape, it is less to my purpose to recite correctly the order and superposition of the strata, than to know why all thought of multitude is lost in a tranquil sense of unity. (Emerson 43)

As expounded, Deleuze and Guattari dismantle the unity of individual subjects and objects in order to construct a rhizomatic multiplicity. Upon a first glance, the use of vocabulary in this passage of *Nature* seems to indicate a celebration of the "tranquil sense of unity" as well as a neglect of "multitude" and, therefore, to contradict the poststructuralists. However, it is important to note that the narrator does not refer to the "unity" of an individual subject or object, but to the unified image of the "rich landscape," which is to mean an environment composed of a sum of different objects. As Gayle L. Smith notes when analyzing the importance of "landscape" for Emerson's "rhetoric of thought," scenery is "philosophically and artistically vital" to the author, for

> it is made up of many parts, some more inherently interesting or pleasing than others, yet it presents a natural, unified impression that is more meaningful than any of its details observed in isolation. (323, 324)

Corresponding to the author's interests thus classified, the individual contemplation of the objects that appear in the scenery does not concern the narrator, who claims that "all thought of multitude is lost." In this passage, "unity" supersedes "multitude." Designating a compilation of individual objects, the concept of "multitude" can be read as a gathering of uncontested unities in the sense of Deleuze and Guattari, while the term "unity" as utilized in *Nature* conceptually approximates Deleuze and Guattari's "multiplicity." The poststructuralists themselves concede the existence of a "unity that applies only to the multiple" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 184). This reading is further corroborated by an additional particularization of the unity found in nature as a "unity in variety" (Emerson 29), adding that "[a]ll the endless variety of things make an identical impression" (ibid.). Like "multitude," the concept of "variety" with its stress on the particularity of individual entities is eclipsed by the concept of "unity," which on its part is questioned in its totalizing potential and constructed as heterogeneous. The fact that heterogeneity is another characteristic principle of the rhizome (*A Thousand Plateaus* 5, 6) further adds to a reading of nature and the variety constructed therein as a sphere of rhizomatic multiplicity. Undoubtedly, the claim that the array of individual objects in the observed countryside effect "an identical impression" can be interpreted to contradict the reading of a limitation of "unity's" totalizing potential on account of its genesis through "variety," asserting instead an understanding of

nature as a sphere of sameness rather than heterogeneity. However, the adjective "identical" can be understood to express a lack of a gradation in importance applying to the perception of the various objects. This absence of visible hierarchies and centers of attention, articulated as "identity," functions as a parameter that makes the described space more rhizomatic.

In spite of the presence of allusions to a lack of hierarchies and to the importance of heterogeneity in Emerson's concept of "unity," the possible negation of the concept of multiplicity in the sense of Deleuze and Guattari and also in Paine's sense has to be acknowledged and contextualized. The emphasis on "sameness" and "unity," if read in a denotational manner and taken at face value, can further locate Emerson's text in an ideological context marked by a rather more clearly established and accepted imperative to unity, heeded by the author. Contention and dissent as implied by a sharply developed sense of multiplicity and heterogeneity, on the other hand, seem to step into the background in Emerson's description. Once again, Paine appears as the author more consciously opposed to the imperatives of political concord and the rejection of dissent marking his context of writing in both revolutionary France and in the Early Republic. The treatment of unity and heterogeneity thus constitutes another important divergence between Paine and Emerson when it comes to the construction of the gaze as a connector between the elements forming part of a system: For Paine, the specific normative gaze is not merely connecting, but fostering awareness of a heterogeneity of both elements and structures into which these elements are implicated; Emerson, on the other hand, acknowledges the multiplicity of elements more readily when subsuming them into a larger whole of which they form part, thus apparently privileging the entirety over the individual parts and their relative diversity, while not obliterating or fully negating the latter.

Reciprocity

Both authors' relative acknowledgement of the importance of multiplicity and heterogeneity also facilitates a consideration of reciprocity as desirable when it comes to constructing an idealized, normative society. The implication upon which Paine's societal outline operates formulates that the relationships of power as they are mediated through the vectors of the gaze are not one-directional. Much rather, Paine postulates that every element entailed by

the “plurality” (*The Age* 709) that exercises vision, and therefore comprehends important principles and phenomena at the root of the very “plurality” as a system, is also the object of perception of other elements of the “plurality” and therefore aids their understanding of different principles and phenomena, as well. As is not surprising for Paine’s argument and Deist standpoint, this image of a reciprocal gaze affecting the entire “plurality of worlds” is once again conveyed in chiefly astronomical terms:

> But it is not to us, the inhabitants of this globe, only, that the benefits arising from a plurality of worlds are limited. The inhabitants of each of the worlds, of which our system is composed, enjoy the same opportunities of knowledge as we do. They behold the revolutionary motions of our earth, as we behold theirs. All the planets revolve in sight of each other; and therefore the same universal school of science presents itself to all. (Paine, *The Age* 709)

Here, Paine’s partiality to the principles of multiplicity and reciprocity grow patent through the author’s certainty of the existence of life on other planets. This life, as one can infer from the manner in which Paine endows it with the designation of “inhabitants” and ascribes to these “the same opportunities of knowledge,” is in this instance postulated to bear considerable resemblance to the way of human existence on planet earth. These anthropomorphized extraterrestrials actualize the said “same opportunities of knowledge” by engaging the earth and, by implication, its dwellers in the same regimes of visual perception as is true of human beings with respect to them. And just like the humans, the “inhabitants” of other planets also partake of “the benefits arising from a plurality of worlds.” These “benefits,” again, Paine identifies as the scientific discoveries and observations fostered by a universe whose structural characteristic is a “plurality” of planets that are both, in motion relative to each other and at a distance from each other that does not impede visual perception from their respective vantage points. Since the observed structure is the same one of multiplicity, no matter from which of these different possible vantage points it is experienced, Paine proceeds to denominate the principles and phenomena potentially arrived at and codified by the dwellers of the different planets as “the same universal school of science.”

This statement seems to explicate Paine's conviction that an objective, verifiable, and universally applicable model of codifying natural phenomena and principles based on their observation exists. The final step of arriving at that universality entails a softening of the conceptual limits separating the poles of the binary opposition of "observer" vs. "observed." Instead of assigning fixed and immutable roles to the parties involved in an interaction, here rendered in specifically visual terms, along the delimitations prescribed by this dichotomy, Paine advocates a reciprocal relationship. For it is the oscillation of the gaze, the reciprocity of vision that predicates the possibility of the establishment of a "universal school of science" shared by all dwellers of that "plurality of worlds." To view from a different angle, one can suggest that Paine identifies reciprocity, or the softening of the binary between subject and object, especially in terms of visual perception, as the main precondition of any universal or potentially universally accepted set of codifications, norms, or laws. Therefore, the reference to a "universal school of science" should not be read as contravening the aforementioned self-reflexive attention to the constructed and contingent character of sociopolitical structures and the concomitant potentially hegemonic narratives; much rather, these narratives are now specified to acquire something akin to a "universal" status only by the sanctioning and agreement of multiple agents within a system. In this manner, the representation of the reciprocity of the gaze approximates the structural characteristics of democratic sociopolitical systems as mediated in the concepts of the rule of the many or majority rule.

Focusing more on the specific sociopolitical events which conditioned the writing of *The Age of Reason*, one can also trace a distinctly historical dimension in this depiction of the "inhabitants" of other "worlds." The specificity of the phenomenon watched by the dwellers of other planets as it is watched by the dwellers of earth is what allows for a more historically based reading of this passage. As Paine states, "[t]hey behold the revolutionary motions of our earth, as we behold theirs." The reciprocal vision Paine describes to be actualized between the planets clearly refers to the processes of revolution in the astronomical sense, meaning the motion of the planets around their respective axes. Taking the historical specificity of both, Paine's biography and the context of the production of *The Age of Reason* into account, a reading of the phrase of "revolutionary motions" in other than strictly astronomical terms seems to impose itself rather prominently. As Larkin puts it analyzing the same passage, "[j]ust as the revolutions of the planets literally provide us with

knowledge of the physical world, the revolutions of societies and governments provide us with knowledge about the political world" (146). Reading the phrase of "revolutionary motion" as pertaining to the semantic field of politics and retaining Paine's biography as a backdrop, one does not struggle to read the passage as referring to the relationship between France and the United States, and more broadly between states in general. The "revolutionary motions" or revolutions in specific national contexts are thus represented as didactic instances from which to deduce general rules with regard to the construction of social and political structures. Once again, Paine seems to assert that politics must of needs also entail political science, with an acute awareness of historical and contemporary processes from which to draw lessons. What is more, Paine implicitly refers to the generally accepted idea that the American Revolution not only preceded the French one temporally, but also causally. As Mark Philp points out, this is precisely the view that Paine espoused prior to the publication of *The Age of Reason*, "urging that it is the American War of Independence that has inaugurated the changes that are bringing down the whole order of Europe" (49). Thus, Paine seems to anticipate that the political changes in France would impact nation-building endeavors on the other side of the Atlantic in the Early Republic. The assumption operating in this passage seems to imply that a thorough regard for the revolutionary processes in other countries coupled with reformatory or revolutionary endeavors in the immediate national context would bring about states that are organized according the same general principles. The temporal proximity of the American and the French Revolutions, their similar discursive emphasis on the negotiation of self-rule, as well as the general interest that both countries shared in each other may have lead Paine to imply in this instance that a gradual but potentially universal calibration of democratic principles of government would be the result of revolutionary processes and general processes of nation-building. Tocqueville's abovementioned depiction of democracy's inevitability may have been anticipated here, albeit in much subtler and rather more technical terms.

To return to a more general structural analysis, one can note that Paine's depiction of the two characteristics of the nightly sky, its multiplicity and its reciprocal connectivity, is once again emblematic of a rhizomatic structure, mediated by the specific qualities of the gaze that he constructs. Of particular interest is that this structure can be described in similar terms to those used by modern-day scholars to depict recent technological

developments. Alice van der Klei employs the concept of the rhizome to theorize the internet and the phenomenon of the hypertext, noting that "[t]he simultaneous presence of heterogeneous space means that there is no hierarchized distance between one element and another; they are in the same territory, grafting ideas across continents irrespective of national boundaries" (48). Paine constructs what Van der Klei calls a "simultaneous presence" by depicting the gaze as fostering connections that virtually reduce distance and hierarchy by introducing the reciprocal characteristic of the gaze into the description. At the same time, Paine's very project of questioning the Christian doctrinaire insistence on human centrality to the divine plan, too, redounds to the reduction of hierarchies apparent in Paine's construction of the nightly sky, as the dwellers of other planets are awarded the same position in the potential relationship with the divine as human beings from the vantage point of planet earth. Interestingly, the "grafting" of information "across continents irrespective of national boundaries" seems to be abstracted to its maximum potential in Paine's description of the didactic messages that the planets and by implication their respective dwellers impart upon each other. Information is thus implied to be available, via deduction, not merely across the boundaries dictated by the topology of the human being's terrestrial abode, but across planetary and galactic borders. Once again, the technocratic solution of the problems faced by democracy in increasingly populous societies comes to mind, the internet being a chief site of such experiments to facilitate viable forms of direct democracy fostering a more immediate contact between the citizens and executive as well as legislative power. As shown, Paine's Deist imaginary allows him to preempt such solutions discursively by constructing a system whose reciprocal and immediate connectivity reaches across multiplicities and is mediated by the reciprocating gaze.

Finally, it is not only the subversion of human centrality to the divine that deviates from hegemonic Christian narratives in this instance. Paine's employment of reciprocity as a structural characteristic also subverts the commonly accepted vector of visual perception in Christian doctrine. As Harry O. Maier argues regarding texts of "apocalyptic prophesy" in early Christianity, they chiefly "function paraenetically by creating a visible self and scripting a role for performance as one watched" (133). Maier introduces his considerations by noting that "[t]his literature repeatedly presents humans as spectacles, actors under God's eye whose deepest thoughts and most secret actions are visible to the divine *speculator* or surveillant" (132, emphasis in the original). Paine's Deist imperative to observe and

scientifically categorize the natural world, particularly astronomical phenomena, as the manifestations of the divine presents a powerful challenge to that established vector of vision, by whose virtue divine authority calibrates itself as total and incontrovertible. Paine postulates the imperative, and the possibility, to exercise surveillance over the divine, thus softening the binary character of the roles of "spectacle" vs. "surveillant" and rendering them changeable, indeed representing them as oscillating and the gaze as reciprocal.

Reciprocity is also a core element of Emerson's conception of the human being's relationship with the natural sphere. More precisely, the principle of connection articulates itself in the representation of the panoptic gaze, which becomes rhizomatic in the process. To come back to the first description of a natural phenomenon treated in *Nature*, namely to the nightly sky, it can be said that the "rays" (Emerson 9) emitted from the manifold centers into all directions function as the connective components in this structure. As these beams of light reach the beholder and determine the way in which he "touches" (ibid.), or, more generally expressed, impacts his material surroundings, they implicate the individual into a system of association. This particular function of "rays" is further specified by the narrator in the chapter on language:

> He is placed in the centre of beings, and a ray of relation passes from every other being to him. And neither can man be understood without those objects, nor these objects without man. (Emerson 21)

Speaking of the individual seeking parallels between the phenomena of nature and the states of the human life, the narrator, firstly, constructs the individual as the central element in nature, thereby seemingly instituting a clear hierarchy favoring the human being as "in the centre of beings." However, this construction of hierarchy does not remain unquestioned as the narrator not only ascribes to the individual a core position in nature but also stresses the role of the "ray of relation." Once again, the appearance of light is utilized as the expression of multiple connectedness. Similar to the function of the "rays" in the first description of the multitude of stars, which related to the individual on the material basis of the touch, the "rays of relation" create a connection between the individual and "every other being." By means of the subsequent qualification, this hyperbolic subsumption of nature into the sphere of the perceived by and connected to the individual corresponds with the description

of the relationship between the stars and the observer: The individual depends on nature for his definition, just as nature depends on its definition by the observer. This means that in spite of the fact that the individual is "placed in the centre of beings," he is not awarded a more powerful position on account of this spatial location, as he is intimated to be defined by that which he perceives as much as that which he perceives is defined through him.

Still in the chapter on nature, the narrator provides a another poignant description of this essentially unaffected relation between himself, representing the individual, and the objects of the material world, becoming, once again, conscious through the contemplation of natural phenomena:

> The greatest delight which the fields and woods minister, is the suggestion of an occult relation between man and the vegetable. I am not alone and unacknowledged. They nod to me, and I to them. The waving of the boughs in the storm, is new to me and old. It takes me by surprise, and yet is not unknown. Its effect is like that of a higher thought or a better emotion coming over me, when I deemed I was thinking justly or doing right. (Emerson 11)

In contrast to Buell, who attributes this "freakish image" regarding the "occult relation between man and the vegetable" solely to a certainly present and undeniable "over-the-top ecstasy" made plain in the metaphors of observation (*Emerson* 94), I propose to read this passage as a specification of the individual's implication in nature. The kind of connection that is clearly stated to be pertaining to sight as the "rays of relation" quoted above still remains intentionally vaguely formulated as "an occult relation" in this passage. Yet even this elusive diction is particularized subsequently, establishing that the "occult relation" is based on a mutual perception in which both, the individual and the natural world, which is signified by "the vegetable" in a *pars pro toto* construction, are actors. The act of perception is represented in its manifestation of the social practice of nodding, enabling the narrator to feel his own perception as object by that which he perceives. Employing the litotes of "not […] unacknowledged," the narrator subtly adds importance and intensity to the description of the feeling which the awareness of his state as not just the active beholder, but also as the beheld, incites. Therefore, in the succeeding description of the consequences of observing the tree's motion, or "the waving of the boughs in the storm," the narrator can be

read not only as the one who perceives, but also as the one who is perceived. The confession of astonishment in this particular idiomatic expression of "takes me by surprise" renders the narrator, grammatically, an object in the sentence, yielding the subject status to that which is observed.

Furthermore, the gaze constructed in this passage of *Nature* follows the logic of the Panopticon. The correction of previous modes of thinking and acting that the narrator regards necessary after the observation of the natural phenomenon, which provides him with "a higher thought or a better emotion," evidences the perceived impact of another entity's gaze. Portraying the impacts of the major site of the gaze, namely the Panopticon, Foucault writes that

> [t]hanks to its mechanisms of observation, it gains in efficiency and in the ability to penetrate into men's behaviour; knowledge follows the advances of power, discovering new objects of knowledge over all the surfaces on which power is exercised. (204)

To put Foucault's analysis shortly and to recall the principles introduced while developing the concept of rhizomatic panopticism, the panoptic gaze determines the conduct of the viewed. Indeed, the mentioned correction of what the narrator in *Nature* thinks of as "thinking justly or doing right" according to the standards inferred from the observation of nature hints to the fact that a gaze is directed at him in return, subjecting him equally to certain norms of thought and action. To compare the gaze's logics presented in *Nature* and *Discipline and Punish*, respectively, it can be said that while Foucault's Panopticon establishes a clear direction of gazes and impacts on thought and action, the descriptions of natural phenomena quoted above all point to the presence of the gaze's reversion – the faculty of the gaze, and the objectifications its exercise effectuates, reciprocate between the individual and the objects found in nature.

Paine describes the same phenomenon of mutual and oscillating vectors of impact between human beings and the dwellers of other planets. The interesting divergence is, however, that Paine does not represent this process in nearly as personal terms as is characteristic of Emerson. In Paine's description, the reciprocal process of observation leads to the formulation of correct scientific tenets that are implied to beneficially impact human

behavior in the realms of the social and the political. The parallel to Emerson's resulting attitude of "thinking justly or doing right" (11) is thus a strong one. However, Paine establishes this beneficial result to be a social and collective rather than an individual and nearly bodily experience. Emerson thus seems to predict Foucault's analysis more closely concerning its concentration on the immediate bodily influences of visual interactions in the context of panoptic structures.

According to Foucault's logic, the gaze is followed by assertions of both, power and knowledge. On account of the construction of an oscillating gaze in *Nature*, both the individual and the articles in his surroundings can be read as "new objects of knowledge." Following a similar vein, the narrator clearly defines the natural sphere as a "discipline" (Emerson 26) in the chapter of the same name, describing the principles and ends of interaction between the human being and his environs, which are largely congruent with Foucault's understanding of the Panopticon's "polyvalent" functions

> of distribution of individuals in relation to one another, of hierarchical organization, of disposition of centers and channels of power, of definition of the instruments and modes of intervention of power. (Foucault 205)

The Panopticon's functions described by Foucault in this passage pertain to ordering, structuring, and relating the observed. The same principle applies to the human beings of planet earth in Paine's account, who are explicitly made into the object of scientific, ordering, categorizing observation by the dwellers of other planets, who use this observation as a basis for the foundation of their own natural sciences. As discussed above, the individual of *Nature* is presented as subject to similar practices by the gaze of his environment, which exercises power over his behavior and perception of his surroundings as well as of himself. In this situation, the main tool and channel of power is the gaze, which effectuates the explained "intervention" into the narrator's and the individual's behavior. On account of the said reciprocating quality of the power-mandating gaze, however, the individual has equally decisive possibilities of "intervention," as he is furnished with the same "instruments" of power as his surroundings. According to the narrator's construction of nature and the environment in general, functions similar to those of the Panopticon elaborated by Foucault are hence manifest in the individual's treatment of it:

> Our dealing with sensible objects is a constant exercise in the necessary lessons of difference, of likeness, of order, of being and seeming, of progressive arrangement; of ascent from particular to general; of combination to one end of manifold forces. (Emerson 26)

Reading this passage of *Nature* against the quoted segment from *Discipline and Punish*, it becomes evident that the individual's treatment of his environment in *Nature* is marked by organizing and arranging operations – operations through which relations of power render themselves discernible. Since the original encounter with nature is, as analyzed above, marked by an emphasis on perception and connection, these enumerated operations of power are, in accordance with Foucault's model, a function of the gaze, of the very "rays" and the "ray of relation" as well as of the "nod" exchanged with the material environs. Just as the gaze is felt by the narrator, who attributes to it an inspiration to change his behavior, implicitly conceding his objectification and manipulability, the narrator claims the gaze in order to manipulate and arrange his surroundings and assert the very objectification and manipulability thereof. In this manner, the reciprocity of the gaze described also implies reciprocity of power.

When contemplating the representation of the reciprocity of the power to impose imperatives facilitated by the gaze, it is interesting to revisit the portrayal of the perception of the nature analyzed at the outset of this segment. To return to the representation of the nightly sky as a model rhizomatic space it must be noted that the reciprocity of the gaze complicates this natural phenomenon's function as, solely, an ideal, that induces the individual to replicate its structure in his associations. As explained before, the gaze as the connective element between the sky and the individual impacts the latter, inducing him to think and act according to the principles authoritatively presented. However, taking the aspect of the reciprocity of both, the gaze and the resulting power into consideration, the stars can be interpreted as being equally under the impact of their beholder. The gaze thus allows the individual to position himself on "a map" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 12) together with the sky, the "vegetable," and all that is perceived by him, inducing, as explained above, processes of becoming of all the elements included into the rhizomatic sphere. In this light, the analyzed personifications of natural objects and phenomena, as for example the smiling

stars and their "heavenly bodies" as well as the nodding "vegetable," represent the assumption of the code of a human bodily structure upon being connected to the individual along the associating line of flight of the gaze. This means that in spite of the narrator's claim that "[t]he stars awaken a certain reverence, because though always present, they are inaccessible" (Emerson 9), the logic of the reciprocating, rhizomatic gaze as constructed throughout *Nature* does not render the humanized and idealized "heavenly bodies" out of the reach of the beholder's impact. This apparent contradiction between the construction of an omnidirectional gaze and the claim of an object's "inaccessible" position evidences the rhizome's ability to generate and to dissolve hierarchic structures, as the rhizome generally allows the presence of apparently opposed or mutually exclusive structures without aiming at a "synthesis" or a resolution (*A Thousand Plateaus* 21). These "unabashed contradictions" that are often said to be a "simply irritating" quality of Emerson's work in general (Friedl 212), assume the function of exemplify the rhizomatic quality of the constructed space in the voice of *Nature's* narrator.

It is also once again interesting that instead of resorting to personifications in the description of the same process, Paine simply postulates the existence of actual persons in the location of the other elements participating on the interaction facilitated by the reciprocal, panoptic gaze. Their becoming is mediated in the description of the learning process about natural sciences that so closely resembles that of the human beings. Once again, the comparison shows that Paine avoids the direct implication of the human body into the metaphorical rendition of the process of becoming. The codes whose reciprocal inscriptions and the concomitant processes of becoming into which both the human beings and the extraterrestrials engage are not codes of the body, but of natural science, and by extension of astronomical phenomena that exceed the bodily sphere of the human. Once again, Paine's orientation on social and political provisions concerning the collective grows apparent, while Emerson privileges the individual and personal experience of such oscillating negotiations of power. This distinction can be read to point to the evident and avowed distinction regarding both tracts' purposes: While Paine sets out to criticize larger formations of power determining sociopolitical structures, Emerson's goal is to provide a philosophical and partly spiritual enquiry into the connection of the human being and nature. The distinction in the contexts of writing, however, can have explanatory power in this instance, as well. After all, Paine's tract came into existence during the French Terror, in which the

interaction of the individual human body with representatives of state power could prove lethal in forms more pronounced and shocking than was true for the 1830s in the US in the context of Emerson's production of *Nature*. While the Antebellum in New England saw the human body's exploitation in economic terms as well as its subjection to other coercions, it was not a cite of as frequent and as public displays of a centralized power's potential lethal impact on a dissenting citizen as is the case with France in 1794. This difference can explain why Paine presented the interactions as engendered by a notion of rhizomatic panopticism in fundamentally collective terms, while Emerson, regarding the relative bodily security the citizen enjoyed in antebellum New England, could allow for a more individual conception of this interaction.

It is in this context that one can read Emerson's many invocations and qualifications of "delight" when it comes to describing the interaction of the human being with the natural sphere. The invocation of a certain degree of agency of the natural sphere when it comes to effectuating specific responses in the individual seems to be qualified in the following passage, which also constitutes the ending of Nature's first chapter. Referencing the concept of the "delight" experienced through one's sojourn in the natural sphere, Emerson concludes in the following manner:

> Yet it is certain that the power to produce this delight, does not reside in nature, but in man, or in a harmony of both. It is necessary to use these pleasures with great temperance. For, nature is not always tricked in holiday attire, but the same scene which yesterday breathed perfume and glittered as for the frolic of the nymphs, is overspread with melancholy today. Nature always wears the colors of the spirit. To a man laboring under calamity, the heat of his own fire hath sadness in it. Then, there is a kind of contempt of the landscape felt by him who has just lost by death a dear friend. The sky is less grand as it shuts down over less worth in the population. (Emerson 11)

At first glance, this paragraph seems to achieve little more than to reiterate a rather commonplace construction of nature that resembles a sphere of projection for the thoughts, emotions, and psychological states of its beholders. While the paragraph preceding this passage describes a highly reciprocal relationship between the individual and even the

inanimate objects of the individual's natural surroundings, this present passage seems to resituate the impulse of and for that relationship clearly with the individual. However, this emphasis on the importance of the individual's state of mind for his experience of nature should not be viewed as a reclaiming of sole agency and thereby a cancellation of the established discursive commitment to the favorable representation of reciprocal relationships between the individual and the environment. It is true that an anthropocentric note, which at all times indicates Emerson's investment into a discourse that insists on the primacy of the human being over nature in its entirety, does rarely seem too far fetched in the context of the tract at hand (cf. e. g. Jehlen). And clearly, such a reading operates particularly well in the contexts of historicist analyses that conceptualize the 1830s as first and foremost a period of aggressive expansion whose hegemonic political agenda would immensely profit from such a discourse of human, particularly white, Anglo-American, and male, ascendancy over the natural world and indeed over everything that can be identified as, to echo Emerson's introduction, "all that is separate from us, all which Philosophy distinguishes as the NOT ME" (Emerson 8).

Enlarging, however, the conceptualization of the 1830s to include a crucial negotiation of and struggle over the formulation of democratic ideals that would determine the direction of American democracy for the course of the 19th century, one could permit further interpretations of passages as the one quoted. Emerson's description of a "wild delight" that "runs through the man" (10) in the face of his direct interaction with the natural sphere and, by analogy, in the face of his participation in political society, finds itself taken up once again by the repetition of the noun "delight." This time, the cause of this positive and exulted emotion presents itself with rather more clarity to the reader: As the previous paragraph defines the "greatest delight" as the nearly mystical experience of reciprocity between the human being and his environs, Emerson now seems to place the responsibility for the experience of this delight and its cause within the field of responsibility of the human being. In this manner, the discursive construction of nature as a space in which the principle of reciprocity, mediated through the oscillating direct visual contact, governs relationships between all elements acquires another function: Amplifying its primary use as the illustration of an ideal potential democratic political structure, the illustration of reciprocity can be read as an admonition in these statements. Since every mental and emotional state directed toward the environs by the human being will be finally directed

back at the human being, the construction of a reciprocity presented in this manner can be read to admonish the individual to enter the natural sphere with a distinctly serene and reciprocity-minded attitude, one that is specifically unmarked by personal concerns. In that vein, the statement that "[n]ature always wears the colors of the spirit" seems to implicitly exhort the readers to be extremely mindful regarding the "spirit," or mental state and intentions, with which they enter a system in which they can be sure of their intentions and actions being met with equivalent reactions by their surroundings.

Seen from this perspective, the last sentences of this paragraph appear less concerned with invoking partly sentimental images of human personal grief projected on nature in an attempt to provide understanding words of consolation, as might be expected of a philosophical tract. Much rather, the said perspective allows reading these references to personal grief as an implicit suggestion or imperative to leave the very same behind when entering a system governed by direct access through vision and concomitant reciprocity among all elements, as this grief would adversely impact the respective participant's experience of the system. Instead of being focused on the achievement of the "greatest delight" of the experience of reciprocity as such, the introduction of personal, particular emotions to the system would dominate this perception, thereby preventing the establishment of a veritable connection between the subject in question and the other participating elements. In this way, Emerson seems to communicate the desirability of an absence of personal emotions and particular motivations when it comes to entering and acting inside political society; this desirability is mediated through the description of a foregoing of the pleasure that a disinterested involvement undertaken for the mere experience of direct connection and reciprocity would entail.

Evaluating ancient Greek democracy, Giovanni Sartori notes that "[i]t essentially consisted of 'voice'; it did not permit or even conceive 'exit'" and that it was therefore "a most simple […] construction" (*The Theory* 282). Similarly, the sociopolitical space informed by rhizomatic panopticism is essentially defined by the effects of the rhizomatic gaze. Its reciprocating quality exemplifies equally reciprocating relations of power, privilege, and subjection that allow individuals to communicate their demands dynamically to and control those in a panoptic manner with whom they form society, while permitting their own subjection to control and to the communication of demands. The space of total, reciprocating visibility thus given shape in the form of the idealized construction of nature

presented epitomizes the mechanism of accountability implicitly proposed by the narrator. In this context, it is convenient to recall Fox's abovementioned definition of accountability as productive of responses to questions as well as of the ability to effectuate consequences in cases of transgressions of law. The rhizomatic gaze constructed by Paine and by *Nature's* narrator represents variations of both of these aspects of accountability. As stated in this section, the gaze functions as the carrier of demand and leads, by virtue of its panoptic power to inscribe imperatives in the objects targeted by it, to these demands' realization. In this manner, the gaze's scrutinizing and imposing connection of the observer and the observed leads to a process of becoming, in which the course of "the capacity to sanction" named by Fox is actualized. Especially the narrator's correction of his modes of thinking when beholding and being beheld by the scenery, leading to the acknowledgement his inspiration to follow "higher thought or a better emotion" after this interaction of gazes, is indicative of the effect of a perceived "sanction." As far as the first aspect of accountability defined by Fox is concerned, it must be noted that the "capacity […] to demand answers" quoted above is both, actualized in the same manner as what Fox calls the "sanction," namely via the gaze's communication of this specific demand and the impending processes of becoming that lead to its fulfillment, and also superseded by the capacity to see answers due to the mentioned total visibility characterizing the rhizomatically panoptic space. In this context, it is interesting to point out that the localization of this reciprocating power to sanction in the human body leads to the individual's participation in the outlined rhizomatically panoptic relations by default: Both, the produced totality of the extent of visibility as well as the gaze's reciprocating function, investing every individual with the power to sanction and to control as the consequence of a physical activity, render the designed sociopolitical space as not to be exited, similar to Sartori's vision of Greek democracy.

Both authors' depictions of an observer's reciprocal connection to the space of multiplicity that is the nightly sky as part of the natural sphere is an apt spot to briefly pause and consider how Paine and Emerson relate to the concept of utopia. In the context of my thesis, this seems a pertinent question, as I postulate that both authors engage in the construction of alternative sociopolitical structural outlines. Mark Jendrysik offers a strong argument for casting Paine as an unambiguously utopian voice that, among other things, expresses "commitment to the ideal of universal revolution" (143), formulates "a vision of a

possible future that is within the reach of humanity" (140), and betrays a "penchant for putting […] political and social goals in programmatic form" (141). What tempers Paine's perception as a utopian thinker, according to Jendrysik, is chiefly the circumstance that "[m]any of his radical ideas have become modern commonplaces" (ibid.). In resonance with such common notions regarding utopia, Jolyon Agar puts it most tersely in his general inquiry into this concept in the texts of different philosophers when he states that "utopian wish-images are conceived in conditions of lack and unhappiness" (7). This, in many ways, can be said to apply to both Paine and Emerson and their respective political convictions in their respective contexts of writing, as the previous chapters intimate.

I suggest, however, that one important aspect usually regarded a mainstay of utopian constructions is missing from both Paine and Emerson, namely the transcendence of the ideal towards which one is to move (cf. Agar 7). Often, this transcendence is also mediated through a teleological narrative. Agar creates a demarcation between "teleology," which he states to denote nothing more than "purpose" (8), and "utopian teleology," which by way of contrast "locates *directionality* within purpose that has emancipative implications. There is a clear *end-point* towards which progression is possible or even inevitable" (ibid.). Rather than constructing an ideal yet to be achieved in a teleological progression of developments, both Paine and Emerson seem to imply that the ideal is already accessible and that the sighted human being can already enter such ideal, normative structures and relationships with his environs. They are therefore not a transcendent ideal, but a present reality actualized in the realm of nature and partly connected with the human being. The actualization of such relationships and structures in the realm of society and politics is thus presented as a matter of acquiring the correct perception regarding those structures, into which one already implicated.

Equality and Exclusions

An issue that commonly features in outlines of democratic utopia is that of the reach of equality and different aspects of inclusion. The representation of the reciprocating gaze also serves as a ground on which both Paine and Emerson negotiate this issue, mainly by elaborating upon the visibility of objects or events of interest, or upon the distribution and quality of the capability of exercising vision. In this context, Paine identifies the propagation of the theological doctrine of revelation to be one chief element that serves as an

instrument to negate a kind of equality that he postulates to be inherent to the process of scientific observation. When it comes to criticizing the practice of basing authority on the alleged primacy of receiving revelation, Paine also implicitly references the importance of well developed and highly structured hierarchies in a system that operates on the basis of an obstruction of a direct relation between the participating elements of society and power. Thereby, Paine constructs a contrast to the system that he defines as ideal and sharpens the formulation of the parameters by which the latter should abide conceptually. Again, this specification is carried out on a basis of passing judgment on the three major monotheistic religions and the texts which they hold as revealed and therefore as sacred:

> No one will deny or dispute the power of the Almighty to make such a communication if he pleases. But admitting, for the sake of a case, that something has been revealed to a certain person, and not revealed to any other person, it is revelation to that person only. When he tells it to a second person, a second to a third, a third to a fourth, and so on, it ceases to be a revelation to all those persons. It is revelation to the first person only, and *hearsay* to every other; and consequently, they are not obliged to believe it. (Paine, *The Age* 667, 668)

Particularly striking about the representation of the mechanism of revelation in this instance is its reference to what might be called a chain of reporting. This chain of reporting begins with its first element, denominated as a "certain person," and then proceeds with the subsequent elements that are all given ordinal numbers to designate their precise position in the sequence of subsequent accounts of the revealed message. As if to underline the arbitrary character of this procedure of sequential reporting, Paine denies the corresponding ordinal number to the element with which the relay of the originally transmitted information begins, bestowing instead the adjective of "certain" upon that initial link. Paine seems to suggest that this link comes to occupy the position of the first element only on account of the subsequent transmissions of the information received to other parties that have not been involved in the primary "communication," not however on account of any essential ascendancy of that "certain person" over those referenced as following. Together with the established "power" of the divine to undertake such transmissions of information to whoever it chooses, the denial of the first ordinal number to the initial link in the chain of reporting once again highlights the arbitrariness of such ascriptions of primacy, as a primary

experience of divine "communication" is postulated to be potentially accessible to every element irrespective of mediating interfaces.

To refute this alleged ascendancy as claimed by the churches, the clergy, and most primarily by the authors of the revered texts, Paine emphasizes the "power" of the divine. He does so by choosing to refer to the godhead as "the Almighty" in this passage in spite of making use of other terms in others, thus once again engaging the semantic field of "power." In this passage of the argument, Paine also employs what might be evaluated as an appeal to logos when it comes to assessing the ability of the godhead to engage in such direct transmissions of information. That appeal to logos is rendered through the litotic turn of phrase as "[n]o one will deny or dispute" in which the alliteration found in the verbs as well as the near hendiadys they form enhance the appeal. Basing his argument on the postulation that nothing is outside of divine omnipotence, Paine seems to formulate this proposition as if to remind the reader that he set out to employ only the "weapon" of "Reason" (*The Age* 665) to formulate his criticisms. And after this specification of the "power of the Almighty" as the main premise of the argument, reason suggests that an all-powerful godhead is not in need of intermediaries to divulge information meant to be received by all in the form of "revelation."

To return to the insinuation of the importance of hierarchies, it is necessary to return to the chain of reporting identified by Paine to operate as a main guarantee of the preservation of power in established monotheistic book-religions. As the numbered order puts the "person[s]" into a specific succession of positions in relation to the immediate contact with the godhead, this order likewise locates them at specific distances away from direct access to power. In that succession, the first element, or Paine's "certain person," claims to have an immediate access to power, while the subsequent elements are assumed to have that access only as mediated by the element preceding them. Such a relay of mediation creates a successive decrease in the power that can be claimed by each element as the levels of mediation and distance increase. The result is a vertical hierarchy in which the degree of mediation determines the precise position of each element, and with it also settles the strict relations of superiority and inferiority as well as subjection.

Paine argues against such a hierarchy by dismantling the claim to authority on which this hierarchy rests. This act of dismantling is chiefly constituted by negating the validity of mediation as a principle of establishing connections between elements in the first place.

Paine negates the validity of mediation by carrying out a specification of terms, which results out of the questioning of the correctness of the prestigious label of “revelation” for the type of mediation that proceeds between the elements that are removed from the initial transmission. Instead of employing this religiously valorized term, Paine suggests the rather more mundane and slightly pejorative appellation of “hearsay,” emphasized in the setting by the italics.

What must be noted about this suggested change of terms is the conspicuous, yet subtle, manner in which it introduces the principle of establishing immediacy of connection through direct vision into the argument. This reintroduction advances by way of selecting a decidedly synaesthetic noun to devalorize mediation and replace the religiously charged concept of “revelation.” The synaesthetic meaning of the suggested endocentric compound noun of “hearsay” combines the sense of hearing and the aural, vocal, and tactile activity of speaking, which is modified by the former. Once again, the impression of the relay imposes itself, as the speaking functions as a mere report of what was heard in a chain of such transmissions of an endlessly removed primary message. What finds itself excluded in this compound, however, is the sense of sight. On account of Paine’s previous and subsequent emphasis of the importance of processes of observation and visual contact with the natural environment, the supposition suggests itself that it is this particular exclusion of the sense of sight that predicates the pejorative aspect of the noun “hearsay” and also its use as a designation for a process that lacks validity for the purpose of justifying claims to power. This suggests that the standard of a relation that Paine applies here seems to be that of an unobstructed and direct visual one. Otherwise, Paine states, individuals “are not obliged to believe” the information transmitted and thereby cannot be expected to consent to their own subordination to someone verbally claiming to have a more direct relation with power.

While intervening bodies will be the focus of my analysis in the next chapter, it is already important here to note that Paine is aware of the structural importance of intermediary figures for the promulgation and naturalization of inequality; Jesus Christ features most prominently among such interface elements, but Paine also devotes attention to those of other monotheistic religions. The formulation of this awareness helps Paine to draw attention to the contingent character of this particular structural element that functions as a signifier of authority and serves to signal the inferiority of the individual believer when it comes to assessing the connection with the sphere of the divine:

> Every national church or religion has established itself by pretending some special mission from God communicated to certain individuals. The Jews have their Moses; the Christians their Jesus Christ, their apostles and saints; and the Turks their Mahomet; as if the way to God was not open to every man alike. (Paine, *The Age* 667)

The fact that Paine is keen on using this awareness of the contingency of the structural element of the interface on political exigencies for the support of his argument becomes clear in this passage, as he once again foregrounds the crucial dependence of the character of any one "church or religion" on a distinct "national" context. In the preceding paragraph, Paine laments in more general terms what he calls an "adulterous connection of church and state" (*The Age* 667), explicitly naming the three monotheistic religions in the context of this connection. Stating that an earnest and critical inquiry into the subject of religion is impossible as long as this connection exists, Paine anticipates political changes to precede and predicate religious ones (ibid.). Speaking specifically of the American Revolution, Paine writes that he "saw the exceeding probability that a Revolution in the System of Government, would be followed by a revolution in the system of religion" (Paine, *The Age* 667). Such a revolution in the realm of religion, as Paine then goes on to state, would eliminate the adoration of interceding figures, for "[h]uman inventions and priestcraft would be detected; and man would return to the pure, unmixed, and unadulterated belief of one God, and no more" (Paine, *The Age* 667). This change in religion could be translated into terms pertaining to politics utilizing the concept of equality. Rather than accepting the claimed ascendancy or superiority of "certain individuals," interest groups, or demographics, citizens would insist that their access to power should be direct. Citizens would thus recognize claimed positions of authority, if not explicitly sanctioned by them, as arbitrary and oppressive.

While Paine does not expatiate on how exactly he conceives of the sphere of politics and the sphere of religion to condition each other, his insistence on and repetition of the probability of a transmutation in one also eliciting a transmutation in the other suggests that he supposes there to exist considerable structural similarities between the two. Here, Emerson's "Introduction" to Nature comes to mind, in which the quality of the connection with the sphere of the divine in its many appearances also impacted the sociopolitical

institutions of a society in a particular historical moment. The presence or absence of intermediary elements between individuals and authority or executive power would be one of these structural similarities. The quoted modification of "church" as clearly "national" substantiates the supposition that the subsequent naming of specific elements pertaining to religion that Paine considered worthy of change are likewise important for and have counterparts in politics. The structural element on which Paine focuses specifically in this context is that of the interface as manifested in a special person of particular importance in every one of the religions mentioned. Paine calls these figures "certain individuals," de-emphasizing their claimed divine or saintly positions distinguished by a more direct access to the deity. Paine states that "churches" seek to justify their positions of power and influence by claiming to have primary and exclusive access to "some special mission from God," or a message from the deity. This access is personified by the figures that the mentioned religions hold as sacred. To refute the claim to power on the basis of the churches' alleged mediation of that "special mission from God" Paine ends the paragraph with a clause that he introduces with the conjunction "as if," which once more iterates his conviction that a direct access to the divine is a fundamental characteristic of human existence and that therefore mediation is not required to establish a "way to God."

Paine's awareness of other monotheistic religions in this instance deserves further attention when it comes to establishing a connection between system a religion and systems of political organization. Paine calls attention to the common character of such intervening elements and thereby questions the claimed special status of any one of the mentioned religions. Rather than being a defining feature of Christianity making it worthy of being regarded a more truthful rendition of divine will, the intermediary element of Jesus Christ is shown to have counterparts in other religious systems. And rather than facilitating a direct relationship with the divine, Jesus Christ and his counterparts are implied to impede that relationship. Paine carries out this implication in the paragraph's last sentence. That sentence creates an opposition between the intermediary figures mentioned in the previous clauses and "every man" and raises the readers' awareness of how this opposition is made to operate in monotheistic religious systems. Presuming the inability of the individual believer to establish a direct connection with the divine and thus claim a certain power, these religious systems postulate the necessity of relaying this connection via another, presumably worthier element; this element then becomes the individual believer's exclusive

opportunity to approach the divine sphere, while at the same time this element is defined as at least partly human and intervening on behalf of the individual believer. This is especially true for the "apostles and saints" named as complementing Jesus Christ's interface function in Christianity, as these elements are explicitly defined as potential plaintiffs for the individual believer who is requesting their assistance. This particular detail in Christian, and especially Catholic, theology implies that the individual believer cannot address God by him- or herself and is in need of a mediator who has a better connection to the realm of the divine, and therefore is positioned higher up along the vertical line of a hierarchy. Paine, as said, refutes this postulation, emphasizing every believer's ability to access the divine directly.

Here, it is convenient to briefly foreshadow an aspect in Paine's argument that will be of central importance in the next chapter, namely the democratic principle of representation. Paine's aforementioned statement regarding the interaction of the political and the religious realm and the concomitant mirroring of structural changes justifies the formulation of analogies based on his observations in the realm of religious organization. Paine's negation of the necessity and legitimacy of mediation in the sphere of religion implies an equal disapproval on his part for comparable mechanisms in the sphere of political organization. As explained above, the main mechanism of mediation in politics can be identified as that of representation. Instead of having a direct relationship with power and assuming the role of the popular sovereign by making use of that power when it comes to making legislative and executive decisions, the citizen passes that power on to an elected representative.

Another potential parallel between the realm of religion and that of politics is the element of the written manifestation of the provisions devised by those in authority. As Paine writes on the subject of the texts that each "national church" mentioned hold as sacred:

> Each of those churches show certain books which they call *revelation*, or the word of God. The Jews say that their word of God was given by God to Moses face to face; the Christians say, that their word of God came by divine inspiration; and the Turks say, that their word of God (the Koran) was brought by an angel from heaven. Each of

> those churches accuses the other of unbelief; and for my own part, I disbelieve them all. (Paine, *The Age* 667; emphasis in the original)

Again, the authority of these "books" springs from the immediacy with which they are related to divine power. In the first case, "face to face" interaction and thereby a direct visual kind of contact is said to be the medium by which the textually manifested message of divine commands took place. Particularly conspicuous about the medium of the book in this instance is its transposition of the process of visual perception from what Paine defines as the "*word of God*" (686, 687), namely the divine creation the way it is patent in nature, onto the two-dimensional page and the graphic rendition of linguistic signs. Thus deflecting the visual perception of the believers and distracting them from what Paine considers to be the truth about the experience of the divine, namely that it is "open to every man alike," these sacred texts serve as one further instance on which the said figures can base their superiority. In this manner, the texts here enumerated by Paine serve as elements that stabilize a *status quo* marked by asymmetrical power structures skewed to the advantage of those intermediary figures and the institutions that act in their stead. Again, some resonance can be detected with Emerson's introductory paragraph quoted above.

This critique, if altered to operate on the basis of a slightly more political vocabulary, can be applied to the effects of written constitutions in nation states. After all, they represent written legal documents that postulate the processes by which power is allocated. As Deak Nabers observes in his analysis of the interaction of literature and slavery law in the Antebellum, "the arena of the legal was itself represented in essentially literary terms" (12) – a statement that is certainly true in Paine's context of writing, as well. Carr et al. are also aware of the importance and impact of the written codification of guidelines that are to function as a constitution; as they describe the process by which the politicians of the Early Republic drafted the Constitution of the United States and comment on the motivation behind it, they state that "[t]he Fathers knew that the science of politics included a concept of *constitutional* government, and they were consciously trying to set down on paper a series of written rules that would commit their nation to this concept" (33; emphasis in the original). What grows clear is that the constitutional document as a piece of written text has a primary function on account of its prescriptive power and therefore is used to formulate

binding “rules” in order to “commit” individuals to those prescriptions, whose quality, theoretically, may be of secondary interest.

This reading is particularly interesting when considering the fact that as a member of the French National Convention, Paine himself must have witnessed the sometimes boisterous negotiation of such documents and must therefore have gained a very keen awareness of how much is at stake in this process. As various of Paine’s biographers aver, Paine was directly implied into the drafting of a constitution that was prevented from coming into effect by the Jacobins in the summer of 1793 – and he was implied into the drafting of this constitution to such an extent as to be regarded its “chief modeller” (sic!) by some contemporaries (Speck 132, 133). A constitution, to draw some analogies to the sacred texts mentioned by Paine, could potentially justify and naturalize arbitrary privileges and facilitate the extolment that group of people professionally engaged in its interpretation, that is to say a political class or the professional group of legal scholars and theorists. Instead of an understanding of political and social structures fostered and facilitated by what Paine would refer to as “Common Sense” and “Reason,” a conception of politics based on specific and exclusive fields of knowledge might institute itself. Thus, the premise of equality would find itself thwarted.

When it comes to negotiating issues of equality and exclusion, Emerson further elaborates on the parameters of a connection of multiple elements that is mediated through the metaphor of visual observation, but uses these vocabularies in order to insinuate the existence of hierarchies when it comes to the ability to engage in visual interactions with the world:

> The stars awaken a certain reverence, because though always present, they are inaccessible; but all natural objects make a kindred impression, when the mind is open to their influence. Nature never wears a mean appearance. Neither does the wisest man extort her secret, and lose his curiosity by finding out all her perfection. Nature never became a toy to a wise spirit. The flowers, the animals, the mountains, reflected the wisdom of his best hour, as much as they had delighted the simplicity of his childhood. (Emerson 9)

In contrast to Paine, Emerson seems to introduce a less optimistic note in his representation of the significance of heavenly bodies and their observation for the conception of political systems. In spite of the direct visual access to the "stars" which Emerson describes in the preceding paragraph, the access on other planes of sensual perception remains impossible. This natural phenomenon and, at the heart of the matter, its rather commonplace observation, namely that objects that are visible are not always within physical reach, Emerson rests in such words that make it appear a portentous paradox when he remarks that "though always present, they are inaccessible." The contrast which Emerson creates by merging the concepts of "presence" with that of "inaccessibility" when it comes to characterizing the heavenly bodies adds to the mystic mode that he tries to achieve in his disquisition on partly metaphysical matters.

Emerson further establishes this mystic mode by making several statements that emphasize the enigmatic character of the natural sphere. This enigmatic character also implies that the implicit imperatives to be learned from the structural arrangements in nature cannot be grasped completely and in their fullest meaning by the beholders, thus always compelling them to further interact with nature. When Emerson writes that "[n]either does the wisest man extort her secret, and lose his curiosity by finding out all her perfection," he seems to reference precisely the attraction that compels the individual to interact with the natural sphere in order to extract an increasing amount of lessons and in order to render obvious and formulate the implicit lessons and imperatives inherent in this sphere's arrangements.

And it is the implicitness of the didactic message that Emerson underlines in this instance. Whereas Paine presents a construction of the natural sphere in which the didactic mission of the "Almighty lecturer" (*The Age* 694) is the obvious premise of all structures in nature and therefore the lessons to be drawn from its observes are fairly clearly replicated for every individual to see and grasp, Emerson insists on the rather more hidden character of these messages. In fact, as Emerson formulates it, it is far from everybody who can interact with nature in a way as to draw lessons, as even the "wisest man" never fully succeeds in this project. Such a definition of the observer of nature in this instance is, while surely a commonplace cliché, also striking on two accounts, both of which establish this position's exclusivity: Firstly, the superlative of "wisest" is ostensibly meant to mark superiority in a hierarchical structure based on intellectual merit, understanding, and knowledge. Secondly,

the noun “man” clearly circumscribes the potential identity of the observer in terms of gender. In other words, Emerson states that the task of recognizing the lessons that the human being is divinely intended to learn from the natural sphere is extremely challenging for even the most intellectually capable of individuals, who is also defined and normativized as male. Emerson further emphasizes the difficulty of the task by employing the verb “[to] extort” to denominate the intellectual recognition of lessons, which implies a laborious process of extraction. In addition, he names these lessons nature’s “secret,” underlining the conception that they are intrinsically difficult to recognize and not to be easily discovered by those who are not adapted to the pursuit.

The passage’s last sentence invokes reciprocal relationship between the beholder and the surroundings in distinctly visual terms. It is the verb in the past tense, “reflected,” that invokes the principle of reciprocity. Rather than simply a regime of projection in which the onlooker subjects his surroundings to his gaze, this passage describes a system in which the character, and specifically the intellectual state, of the beholder determines what he encounters in his surroundings. The intentions directed at the surroundings are “reflected” back at the onlooker and thus decisively impact the experience of engaging with the natural sphere. In that manner, both “the wisdom of his best hour,” as the pole that stands for sound judgment and responsibility, as well as “the simplicity of his childhood,” set as an opposite to that pole, being the two modes in which the individual could approach his environment would likewise constitute the mode in that this environment would approach him, thus reflecting back at the individual the mode of engagement he set out to employ.

The concept of “childhood” comes to play an important role later in the chapter, this time to mark the exclusive character of the definition of a suitable observer in *Nature*. Emerson states:

> To speak truly, few adult persons can see nature. Most persons do not see the sun. At least they have a very superficial seeing. The sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and heart of the child. The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood. His intercourse with heaven and earth, becomes part of his daily food. In the presence of nature, a wild delight runs through the man, in spite of real sorrows. (Emerson 10)

This passage qualifies the character of the visual contact connecting the individual and the environment. The tract's introduction as well as the first paragraphs of the first chapter seem to suggest that the default assumption regarding vision in *Nature* formulates a direct and uninterrupted as well as reciprocating contact between observer and observed to result from it. In this quoted passage this definition is not questioned, but the circle of individuals who are defined as agents in terms of that specific rhizomatically panoptic vision finds itself significantly reduced when Emerson states that "few adult persons can see nature" and adds that "[m]ost person do not see the sun," further expanding the restriction and qualification by stating regarding the majority of adults that "they have a very superficial seeing." The use of adjectives modifying number in this instance further highlights the aforementioned exclusivity of the position of the observer, as the faculty to perceive the natural sphere accurately is ascribed to "few," while "most" people are stated to fail when it comes to, arguably, fairly basic visual processes. Again, the majority of individuals are excluded from being granted agency in terms of rhizomatic panopticism. In addition, the manner of introducing the quoted statements with the platitudinous phrase of "[t]o speak truly" appends a supercilious air to the following words, as the speaker now establishes himself not only to wield a particular truth, consisting of the ineptitude of the majority of people to correctly engage in visual processes, but also to have held back that truth, refraining from uttering it out of a pretended courtesy toward that majority, to which the reader is probably invited to count him- or herself. In that manner, the speaker seems to establish superiority, thus further emphasizing the exclusivity of both, the knowledge he claims to espouse and the performance of the correct actions that he defines.

This construction of exclusivity with regard to the correct engagement in visual processes, however, does not remain without an explanation. When it comes to better understanding the present construction of exclusivity, it is important to heed the use of the binary opposition of the concept of "childhood" as opposed to the concept of "adulthood" in this passage. Emerson posits that in contrast to the adult, the child is capable of more than merely "superficial seeing" and also of the correct perception of the sun, which "shines into the eye and the heart of the child." The actualization of this opposition through the discussion of the visual perception, or non-perception, of that heavenly body which as the main natural source of light preconditions vision is particularly telling.

The translation of this description of distinctions in the capabilities of adults and children in terms of visual perception into a terminology pertaining to the study of democratic political organization can have explanatory power for this passage. Vision as the main connective force between individuals and their surroundings in Emerson's descriptions is always, as mentioned earlier, predicated upon light, the source of which, however, Emerson constructs the adult individual as incapable of seeing. To once again equate vision and political power and agency, one can state that not to see the source of light which enables every individual to see amounts to not understanding the principle which grants every individual power in a democratic political system. This principle can be identified as that of popular sovereignty, which, if understood correctly and vigorously internalized, should compel the individual implicated into a democratic political system to seek more direct participation and immediate engagement in order to both, secure the representation of one's own interests and render the actualization of power possible in the first place. Accordingly, the lack of an internalization of this principle can be expected to hamper individual eagerness to participate in political processes and engage in direct relations entailing political power with other participants. Hence, relying on the implied affinity between the gaze and political power, the text suggests that only "few adult persons can see nature," or interact in a politically aware and effective as well as power-conscious manner with other elements in a democratic political system.

An engagement with society after the internalization of the principle of popular sovereignty is represented as a highly pleasurable state, both in intellectual and physical terms. The direct engagement with one's environment acquires a nurturing and sustaining character when Emerson associates this engagement with nourishment. As the text states regarding the individual capable of direct visual interaction with his surroundings, "[h]is intercourse with heaven and earth, becomes part of his daily food." The fact that Emerson paraphrases the direct contact with the natural and, by analogy, with the political environment as "intercourse with heaven and earth" in this instance points to the reciprocal as well as to the hierarchy-transcending character of this interaction. The term "intercourse" does not imply a one-directional or unilateral mode of engagement, but much rather designates reciprocity in the relation. At the same time, Emerson engages the well-known dichotomy of "heaven" vs. "earth" and thereby activates a notion of vertically arranged hierarchies in which the former term seems to denote superiors, while the latter is used to

reference peers. With both spheres along the vertical line of the hierarchy constructed in this manner, however, there is a relationship of reciprocity that proves nourishing and sustaining to the participant thus engaged. The next sentence further exults in this representation of bodily comfort by stating that "the presence of nature" induces a "wild delight" in the participating individual. While stating that this ecstasy-like emotion "runs through the man" gives this representation a very physical appeal and makes it readable as a primarily bodily sensation, the adversative adage of "in spite of real sorrows" also adds an emotional and intellectual aspect to the perception of "wild delight." At the same time, the hierarchies are represented as not impermeable: What was expressed as "heaven and earth" finds itself substituted with the more general and all-comprising term of "nature" in the following sentence. This substitution once again directs the reader's attention to nature's construction as consisting of different spheres, those in which hierarchies are expressed more strongly, and those in which they becomes less perceptible and decisive.

The representation of a participating individual retrieving physical pleasure from the interaction with nature and, by analogy, with other elements participating in political society, is an aspect that prevails in Emerson, but does not feature as strongly in Paine. The pleasures represented by Paine are connected to the satisfaction of learning and knowing, as well as to the experience of aesthetic gratification when engaging in the observation of the natural sphere. These pleasures are linked to, but fall short of the physical intensity of pleasure described by Emerson. In Emerson, the physiological act of gazing at one's surroundings does not merely bestow upon the person engaged in it information about the same surroundings, in the manner found in Paine. Rather, the act of gazing is physically enjoyable in and of itself. Part of this physically enjoyable character of visual perception seems to be constituted by its very reciprocity – a characteristic to which, as explained, Paine does not dedicate a lot of conceptual room in his descriptions.

To rephrase in the terminology of politics and resonate with observations made earlier in this chapter, Emerson's outline of political society is one where the individual feels much more physically engaged by political participation than is the case in Paine's outline. This distinction may also be indicative of the extent to which each author conceived it necessary, beneficial, or maybe even inevitable that society and its institutions would be granted physical access to participating citizens. As said before, Paine's context of producing *The Age of Reason* is characterized chiefly by instability, upheaval, and institutional brutality

during the period of Jacobin terror. Institutional access to the citizen's body was frequent, brutal, and oftentimes lethal, as the many executions and incarcerations characterizing that period attest (cf. Williamson 207). Paine himself was famously arrested and detained, to finish *The Age of Reason* in French jail under the Jacobin regime (e. g. Ricketson and Wilson 94). These conditions at the time of writing the said text might have given Paine little reason to imbue the representation of a body participating in political processes as one experiencing physical pleasure or gratification. Much rather, Paine's ideal society and political system seems not to make any provisions for the institutional access to the citizen's body, focusing much more intently on the visual contact between elements and especially on the observation of authority.

Obviously, similar statements regarding the brutal and relentless access of institutions to human bodies, often with lethal consequences, could be uttered regarding the period and national context in which Emerson produced *Nature*, were one to focus on populations of the enslaved, of Native Americans, or the on the growing numbers of the incarcerated and the institutionalized. Emerson's permissiveness regarding the idea of social or, by extension, institutional access to the citizen's body and the valorization of this access as potentially enjoyable indicates that experiences such as Paine's were largely absent from Emerson's reality and from the context in which *Nature* was produced. Rather than representing this particular vector of influence, that is to say from the institutions toward the citizen, as always already coercive, and instead of not conspicuously excluding this vector in the manner of Paine, Emerson represents it as potentially nourishing for the individual citizen.

In this understanding of social and political participation as potentially physically pleasurable Emerson's *Nature* indicates that the government in 1830s America was much better able to vest its coercive powers in much less intrusive institutions than was the case in Jacobin France, which finally promoted the inscription of required disciplines and expectations into the very bodily understanding of the citizen and the concomitant perception of pleasure. Being true primarily for white males, this conception of a pleasurable political participation hinges on its opposition to those populations to whom participation, and thus this kind of pleasure and nourishment, is denied. It is also in this context of exclusions that the emphatic focus on the male body and its perception of pleasure can be understood. When Emerson writes that "a wild delight runs through the man" and invokes

images of male corporeality, he can be assumed to do so in contrast to the female, who is not endowed with active political rights in the Antebellum, or with the enslaved, to name but a few of those populations excluded from active citizenship during that era. It is this political reality of exclusion on which the quoted passage seems to operate.

Conventional interpretations of heavily or overly aestheticized descriptions of nature during the literary period of Romanticism tend to hinge on notions of nostalgia in the face of industrialization and the increasing pressures of capitalism. As has become commonplace to note, the Romanticist and Transcendentalist relationship to these phenomena was by no means unambiguous. Duane E. Smith, for example, describes the "curiously American manifestation of the Romantic Movement" noting that it is representative of "the odd phenomenon of partaking of the very characteristic against which it was in revolt" (303), relating this opposition mainly to "the civilization created by the Industrial Revolution" (ibid.). Smith emphasizes that Transcendentalists "were never quite able to conceal their enthusiasm for the possibilities presented by industrial and commercial development" (ibid.), further terming Transcendentalism "a collaboration between Bentham and Schleiermacher" (304). Smith concentrates on the expression of this "collaboration" in the development of the concept of individualism, yet his is also a very pertinent observation when it comes to evaluating Romanticist, and particularly Transcendentalist, representations of nature. The contrasting reading of *The Age of Reason* and *Nature* suggests that such description of the natural sphere in the US-American context might also be predicated on the gradual establishment of political and social institutions that induce the citizen to interact with society and with the government in ever more physical and increasingly less openly coercive ways. Rather than seeking and constructing an idyllic and pastoral alternative in the natural sphere, authors engaging in such descriptions of nature could thus be read to project what might be called an increasingly Foucauldian state onto nature. In this manner, the physical pleasure of one's own presence in a system that vests its coercive mechanism in not openly physically violent institutions of surveillance as well as the internalization of the principles of expected and received political interaction become the new paradigm of constructing the individual in society and politics. The concomitant projection of this paradigm onto the natural sphere then produces the representation of what can be described as a rhizomatically panoptic space, in which the reciprocity of the gaze finds constant emphasis.

In this context, it is important to keep in mind that both, democracy and capitalism strongly depend on mechanisms of surveillance and internalized disciplines for their proper functioning. As the inherent goodness, or lack thereof, of the people as citizens has been a constant point of debate, so has the need to police the workplace never ceased to be placed front and center when it comes to the concerns of capitalism. The fact that capitalist structures of production had a much firmer hold on industrializing antebellum America than on still largely feudalist France at the end of the 18th century may thus be one further reason for why Paine is less concerned with representing the individual as being joyfully gazed upon by the surroundings than is Emerson. Paine's lack of focus on processes of reciprocity that would exhort the individual participant to conceive of himself as, occasionally, the object of the gaze and, by extension, of power, as well as his lack of focus on the potential pleasures of such an arrangement, might count as one further reason why *The Age of Reason* did not resonate well with American audiences during the Early Republic. Fiercely devoted to the project of self-rule and its underlying principle of popular sovereignty, *The Age of Reason* does not leave conceptual room for the preservation of rigid hierarchies or the establishment of coercive, if not openly violent and brutal institutions. The establishment of precisely such hierarchies and institutions was, however, precisely the kind of conventional nation-building effort in which the Early Republic's political elites were involved. Nation-building is largely defined as the crystallization of such very institutions as well as of the processes that would ensure their operation and power.

To reiterate, the present analysis shows that connectivity is constructed in mainly visual terms between the constitutive elements of a normatively devised system by Paine and Emerson. Both authors further project a didactic character on the visibility of the constitutive elements, which they conceive of as defined by multiplicity and heterogeneity. Paine renders this projection explicitly clear as a construction undertaken by the beholder, while Emerson presents these characteristics of didactic objective and multiplicity to be an essential purpose inherent in the systems he describes. After this divergence, Paine and Emerson coincide again in the construction of reciprocity as a main characteristic of the connective element of the gaze, which introduced attributes such as responsiveness and accountability into the characterization of the participating elements. When it comes to the definition of the distribution of the gaze as a capability, Paine and Emerson diverge once again, as Paine implies the limitation normatively universal, while Emerson restricts the

ability to engage in correct processes of vision to a few participants, thereby invoking a rather more elitist notion of political agency.

7. Transparence

The present chapter deals with the uses of transparence as a vehicle for the expression of structural prerequisites for democratic systems in Paine's and Emerson's texts. In a way, this vehicle can be understood to further explicate the features of the kind of normative connectivity that informs a system of rhizomatic panopticism. While the previous chapter works out and identifies the characteristics of the gaze as a connecting and equalizing feature that also expresses a reciprocity of relations between participating elements in a system of rhizomatic panopticism, the present chapter characterizes the system within which the rhizomatically panoptic gaze can optimally operate. And that system's main attribute I postulate to be transparence. In order to differentiate the authors' respective constructions of transparence, I analyze the ways in which they represent mechanisms that operate on the principle of an insertion and interruption of direct connections between the constituent elements of any one system. In this context, I first turn to Paine's and Emerson's respective statements on and evaluations of language as a system of representation. The second section examines the role that both authors ascribe to the specifically religious, Biblical figures that insert themselves between the believers and the godhead. Finally, I analyze the importance that both authors concede to temporal aspects and histories when it comes to either fostering or impeding direct relationships between participating elements within a system. Transparence, as the proposed analysis aims to show, functions as an effective site for the discussion of the mechanisms and implications of political representation in both texts.

Language

Paine's view on representation as it is mediated through his descriptions of language use and its position in his work features prominently in the scholarship on Paine's political thought. Focusing mainly on *Rights of Man*, and also on Paine's mode of operation as a member of the National Convention, Georgina Green sets out to elucidate how in Paine's texts "theories of language and representation, politics and ethics are mutually implicated,"

which is rendered particularly visible in “a tension between Paine’s conventionism, his belief in collecting the sovereign will of the people, and his commitment to the sovereignty of justice” (70). Surveying research on Paine’s stance toward political representation as well as Paine’s own statements in tracts such as his *Letter Addressed to the Addressers*, Green infers that Paine’s is “an understanding of representation as compromise, rather than perfection” (75). Connected to this observation is Green’s conclusion that Paine regards language “not as a binding contract but as an ongoing and provisional representation” (77), but also that Paine assumes a “posture of alterity” (88), which fulfils “the purpose of calling into quasi-presence an unknowable entity. Firstly ‘the people’, and next those whom the supposedly universal ‘people’ excludes” (ibid.). Green brings Paine’s experience of being a member of the National Convention while unfamiliar with the French language into her argument in a most interesting way when she states that

> [t]he situation of having his speech translated from its original language and read by someone else furnishes Paine with an opportunity to allegorize the similar process of substitution occurring at a political level at the Convention. The resulting situation – where the speech only represents him imperfectly, and therefore to a certain extent excludes him – works as an allegory to remind the Convention of their inevitably imperfect representation. (84)

It is in this context of a project to “disable the tyranny of claims to absolute and perfect mediation” (82) that Green quotes from *The Age of Reason* in a cursory manner, focusing on a passage in which Paine highlights the inaccuracies which are wont to happen when texts are handed down by means of translation and tradition in his criticism of the Bible (82, 83). I argue that a more detailed analysis of *The Age of Reason* as well as its discussion of language and of interceding religious elements such as Jesus Christ or Scripture, which form interfaces between the individual and the godhead, can yield a basis on which one can venture to formulate Paine’s criticism of representative mechanisms in politics in stronger terms: Rather than imperfections and inadequacies of representative processes, Paine implies the assumption of a fundamental incongruence between the principle of democratic participation and the principle of political representation to inform his construction of a society.

In rendering this disparaging view of representation visible, Paine once again utilizes the mode of exegetic criticism as well as a criticism of the cultural impact that church doctrines exert on the position of languages in society:

> As the christian system of faith has made a revolution in theology, so also has it made a revolution in the state of learning. That which is now called learning was not learning originally. Learning does not consist, as the schools now make it to consist, in the knowledge of languages, but in the knowledge of things to which language gives names. (Paine, *The Age* 695)

Paine's criticism of a Christian emphasis on the study of languages can be read under the premises of a system of values that underscores immediacy and reproaches mediation. A "revolution in the state of learning" (Paine, *The Age* 695), namely one that favors the study of languages, was induced by Christianity according to Paine. This emphasis on language, as he continues to reason, inhibits processes of learning whose subject matter and aim is "the knowledge of things to which language gives names" (ibid.). In contrast to the study of languages, it is particularly this process of the acquisition of knowledge that Paine constructs as normative, contending that the study of language is "not learning originally" (ibid.).

This passage allows inferring that Paine defines language as an interface between the human mind and the world outside it. An instrument rather than a desired object of study, language is supposed to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge about the world. From this conception, it follows that the initially sanctioned effect of language is corrupted when the endeavor of study finds itself directed at what was meant as its instrument. Language as the object of study fails to mediate directly between the human mind and the world. Rather than providing the human being as its user with one particular way of accessing the world and engaging with it, language as the object of study defers this access and this engagement, relegating these effects of language as instrument to other instruments and other systems of mediation. In other words, the study of languages as presented by Paine provides the individual occupied with it with several interfaces through which to access the world; the process of studying these languages, however, deflects the individual's interest and engagement away from the world, encouraging a focus on the interface itself instead.

In this context it is of particular interest that Paine constructs an opposition between "[t]hat which is now called learning" and "learning originally" (ibid.), contrasting not only the

process of knowledge acquisition directed at the world with that directed at language itself, but also contrasting two different historical periods. The adverb "originally" can thus be taken to refer to both, the specific historical period preceding the "christian system of faith" (ibid.) and the re-orientation of "learning" towards languages that went along with it, as well as the acquisition of knowledge directed towards the world and preferred by Paine. Thus, the adverb invokes a perceived immediacy between the individual and the world, rather reminiscent of the "original relation to the universe" (Emerson 7) formulated by Emerson in the introduction to *Nature* as an ideal to be achieved. The perceived immediacy, brought about by the absence of a focus on the instrument of cognition, was most prevalent in antiquity according to Paine. As he goes on to argue:

> The Greeks were a learned people, but learning with them did not consist in speaking Greek, any more than in a Roman's speaking Latin, or a Frenchman's speaking French, or an Englishman's speaking English. From what we know of the Greeks, it does not appear that they knew or studied any language but their own, and this was one cause of their becoming so learned; it afforded them more time to apply themselves to better studies. The schools of the Greeks were schools of science and philosophy, and not of languages; and it is in the knowledge of the things that science and philosophy teach that learning consists. (Paine, *The Age* 695)

In this instant, Paine expands and formulates more clearly the premises inherent in his preceding remarks on knowledge acquisition and the study of languages, applying his thesis to periods before Christianity. This passage is noted to have prompted readers to infer Paine's antipathy towards the authors of Greek and Roman classical antiquity – a notion often amplified by Paine's reported lack of interest in acquiring knowledge of either the Greek or the Latin language in his childhood and adult years (cf. Robbins 135). In his essay "Thomas Paine and the Classics," however, A. Owen Aldridge points out that this critical stance towards the languages of Greco-Roman antiquity pervaded the cultural sphere of which Paine was a part and should therefore not be seen as a merely personal disaffection; Aldridge notes "a strong tendency among many people in the Federal period to regard the classical languages as nothing but elegant and useless adornments, and Paine's attitude reflects this view and was conditioned by it" (375). In fact, Aldridge remarks, Paine

"approved the historical achievements and the subject matter of the most famous works in the classical tradition" (ibid. 370). Nonetheless, Paine identified the emphasis that the church placed on the acquisition of these languages as "a means of keeping the human intellect in bondage" (ibid. 375), obviating dogmatic "falsehood being exposed through the discovery of new scientific knowledge" (ibid. 374).

It is this ambiguous facet of Paine's critical stance toward the study of languages combined with a reverence for Greek and Roman antiquity that renders interesting insights into his conception of transparence. Constructing the existence of viable systems of "science" and "philosophy" as contingent upon a lack of preoccupation with matters of language, Paine focuses his attention on the example of the Greeks. Speaking of what he presents as the Greek norms of knowledge acquisition, Paine renders clearer the mechanism of deflecting interest and engagement from what he considers worthwhile subject matters of study. As said, not encumbering themselves with the study of languages "afforded them more time to apply themselves to better studies" (Paine, *The Age* 695). In other words, the neglect of the study of languages allowed the Greeks, according to Paine, to engage directly and exclusively with the material world, the result of this engagement being lauded by Paine as manifest in the "schools of the Greeks" (ibid.).

At the same time, Paine's explicit and apparently random reference to Greece can be read in more specifically political terms. After all, classical Greek culture is, until today, widely perceived as the environment in which the most vigorous forms of democracy could be negotiated and practiced; in the historical context of the production of *The Age of Reason*, this was even more so the case. While Paine does not explicitly mention democracy to be one such "school[s] of science and philosophy" (Paine, *The Age* 695) developed by the Greeks, the reference nonetheless establishes itself on account of the connotation carried by the invocation of Greek antiquity. What is more, Paine uses the broadest hyperonyms of "science and philosophy" to refer to what he deems noteworthy and commendable achievements, refusing to name which of the specific branches of those disciplines he has in mind. These broad terms actualize an implicit reference to an equally broad spectrum of subjects and fields of knowledge production. This broadness of definition invites the reader to activate frames connected with Greek achievements in the spheres of "science and philosophy" and democracy is not unlikely to be one of those activated frames. In this manner, Paine uses the very common if reductive view of ancient Greek history as being

prominently marked by significant episodes of self-rule in order to implicitly invoke the frame of the polity of democracy. Democracy, being implicitly present in the quoted instance, is thus also related to a certain attitude towards languages that Paine ascribes to the Greeks of the antiquity. The achievements in the said fields of "science and philosophy" could only be accomplished, argues Paine, because the interest of ancient Greek scientists and scholars was firmly directed toward the non-linguistic world. Following Paine's logic further, one can formulate that it is the same indifferent stance toward the study of languages that exudes a favorable effect on the development of democracy.

As pointed out in the preceding chapters, it is necessary to keep in mind that the association of ancient Greece with democracy was not connoted positively throughout the Early Republic, for the concept of democracy itself was connoted with mob-rule rather than with viable polities. Arlene Saxonhouse notes that "[a]s is evident through the *Federalist Papers* democracies such as those found in Athens are the source of chaos, not the much desired order. The more positive democratic, participatory vision of ancient Athens began weaving itself into the American consciousness in the 1820s" (487). Thus, when Paine refers to Greece and implicitly references Greek forms of democracy as being of a similarly exemplary nature as Greek achievements in the natural sciences, he once again assumes a rather contrary position that would not find support, at least in an American context, until the Antebellum, in which it was much more common to find allusions and references to "the democratic spirit of ancient Athens" or "the Greek spirit that overthrew tyrants and founded the political model of self-rule" (Saxonhouse 487).

Paine's invective against foreign languages as deflecting elements that keep the individual's attention away from the divine message can be read as a criticism of the principle of linguistic representation in general, as Paine defines the true representative code mediating divine will to be the natural sphere. To vest any pretended divine message in words is thus an unnecessary mediation between the human being and the divine, as the latter element of this communicative process already undertook its expression in what Paine regards the clearest possible terms, accessible to anyone endowed with the sense of eyesight. Not unlike the figure of Jesus Christ, coincidentally conceived of as the word of the father in some Trinitarian interpretations of early church fathers (cf. e. g. E. L. Miller 449), the principle of linguistic representation especially in the context of religion and the mediation of divine will, becomes an intervening instance impeding a direct communication

between the realm of the divine and the human being in Paine's construction of communicative processes between these two elements. This construction lends itself well to the recognition of parallels with constructions of political systems that disavow representation of citizens by representatives and other officials as fundamentally at odds with the defining principles of democracy, such as popular sovereignty and self-rule. Paine upholds this renunciation of representation in political terms as a principle that renders the citizen's direct impact on decision-making processes weaker by impeding a direct access to the source of power. Paine's construction of democracy embodies a strong insistence on retaining popular sovereignty at all times and not to mitigate its potential material impact by delegating the rights and responsibilities that it implies to a representative body.

Emerson exhibits a much more tolerant, in some instances even celebratory, attitude towards processes of linguistic representation, casting them not as obfuscating and intervening elements, but explications of human thought processes. Emerson sees the principle of analogy as chiefly informing processes of linguistic representation, wherefore he includes some deliberations on the construction of analogies generally in the chapter he devotes to the discussion of language:

> It is easily seen that there is nothing lucky or capricious in these analogies, but that they are constant, and pervade nature. These are not the dreams of a few poets, here and there, but man is an analogist, and studies relations in all objects. (Emerson 21)

What Emerson presents as a key observation regarding the fundamental relationship between the human being and nature is likewise an important point to note for the consideration of representative mechanisms and their theoretical underpinnings in a democratic system. Emerson's observation postulates the practice of understanding the world in terms of analogies as a core characteristic of the human mind, expressing this conviction in particularly terse terms by stating simply that "man is an analogist." This practice, Emerson insists, is inspired by natural processes and phenomena, as they themselves operate on the basis of the same principle of analogy. Emerson makes a point of emphasizing that nature's stated operation on the basis of analogy is indeed a material and repeatedly observable, stable fact, and not merely a construct resulting from human

interpretation of nature: Rather than being “the dreams of a few poets” that render their own, altered version of the phenomena they observe in their poetic language, the principle of analogy is not “lucky or capricious,” but “constant.”

Analogy and representation share some structural operations. Especially in the case of representation in the context of electoral processes, an analogy between the voter and the elected official seems to be presupposed. The analogy operates in a more obvious way when the representative is understood as a delegate who is entrusted with the execution of the expressed will of his or her constituency, and less so when the representative is seen as a trustee commissioned by the constituents to exercise his or her best judgment on the general behalf and in the general interest of the same constituents, as Rehfeld’s previously mentioned classification implies (cf. 217). Representatives, by virtue of their role as virtual substitutes for the represented citizens in decision-making organs, are generally postulated to stand in some degree of analogy to their constituents in both cases, whether they are considered delegates or trustees. The most obvious aspect characterizing the relationship between the representative and the elector that also lends itself to being conceptualized in terms of analogy is the assumed convergence of interest. It is by virtue of these structural similarities that Emerson’s positive theorization of the principle of analogy as central to human thought processes and to a human perception of the world can also be read in distinctly political terms pertaining to democratic representation.

The privileging of the principle of analogy in this instance is also of importance in the larger context of Emerson’s *Nature* as a text and its potentials of meaning. The insistence on the principle of analogy as a defining mechanism for the expression of the natural sphere opens up the text of *Nature* itself to be read as an analogy of sorts, and its content as standing in a relation of analogy not only to those material referents that it explicitly describes, but also to those that are structurally similar. In the context of such an emphasis on analogy as a core determinant of material existence, descriptions of natural phenomena and their metaphysical significance can be very plausibly read as standing in a relationship of analogy to political systems or social structures that share formal characteristics with the referents directly mentioned and described.

The framing of the principle of analogy shows once again that Emerson’s understanding of representation is a fundamentally favorable one. The mental practice of assuming that concepts are induced to stand for other concepts is, according to Emerson, a

ubiquitous occurrence, a defining mechanism of the natural sphere and the human being's interaction with it, and finally an intellectual aid that furthers understanding by way of creating analogous models to the actual concepts one seeks to understand. Elements intervening between the individual and the concept with which one seeks to establish a relationship, a relationship characterized by understanding, is thus not opaque, as Paine would have represented it, but on the contrary depicted as aiding the clarity of the represented concept or object. This process of representation through analogy renders concepts and objects quasi adjustable to various scales and circumstances. As established previously, questions of scale often impact discussions of democratic outlines. The system of democratic representation itself is often framed as having emerged in order to address precisely those problems that crystallize when transferring democratic structures operating in numerically smaller constituencies to a larger scale. Emerson's further approaches to scaling methods will reemerge in the course of this chapter.

The postulation of analogy as the main factor in the material expression of the human being's environment exceeds, however, the material plain in Emerson's elaborations on language. In other words, analogy does not only operate between different material objects among themselves and between material referents and linguistic signs in Emerson's model; much rather, there is a fundamental process of analogy at play between the material realm and the spiritual one, with vector of influence flowing from the latter to the former:

> It is not words only that are emblematic; it is things which are emblematic. Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact. Every appearance in nature corresponds to some state of the mind, and that state of mind can only be described by presenting that natural appearance as its picture. (Emerson 20)

As this passage shows, linguistic and quasi-linguistic systems receive a fundamentally different evaluation from Emerson than they do from Paine. First of all, Emerson evaluates nature itself to be one such system, one that represents concepts of a "spiritual" nature by materializing them as palpable objects in the natural sphere. Nature becomes in and of itself a quasi-linguistic system of representation that facilitates the comprehension of what Emerson calls "spiritual facts." In fact, comprehending those immaterial, "spiritual" counterparts of the materialized objects is not possible but for the provision of a model by

those objects, as Emerson states. He utilizes the adverb "only" to emphasize the inescapability of having to rely on such "natural appearances" of "spiritual facts" necessary to "describe[d]" the latter and therefore to understand them adequately. The "symbol[ic]" character of nature in its function as a system of quasi-linguistic representation is thus valorized and highlighted as the sole access to that spiritual sphere in which the original and eternal "spiritual facts" representing the source forms of the materialized or "natural facts" are stored.

It is fair to say that some overlap between Paine and Emerson can be detected when it comes to the conception of the material world as a text-like creation. Paine awards to nature a secondary role as the representation of a sphere that the human cannot access only inasmuch as he understands it as the manifestation of principles that follow divine intention and divine will to the fullest extent. Paine represents nature as the "word of God" (*The Age* 686) and thereby, too, relies on a juxtaposition of the natural sphere with all of the phenomena that comprise it and, also, with a system of quasi-linguistic representation. Nonetheless, the relation between the divine qua author and the natural sphere qua text remains fairly direct: What might be called the text of nature is represented as an immediate product of the deity's authorship. As such an immediate product, the natural sphere has the status of a first-grade, primary creation. It thus grows clear that the term of the "word of God" comes into use for the natural sphere for polemic rather than explanatory reasons. This metaphor allows Paine to debilitate the argument of Christian institutions to wield sole power over and access to the manifest will of the deity in the form of the Bible. Paine suggests that rather than a linguistic text relaying events from a distant past, the natural sphere and its phenomena should be regarded as an infinitely more direct expression of divine will, being a first-order, immediate creation authored by the deity, instead of a textual construct operating on cascading representations and relays from the claimed witnessed historical events.

Emerson, by way of contrast, does not regard the natural sphere in the same order of an immediate creation of the divine. Rather, he postulates, in accordance with his Idealist and dialectic philosophical underpinnings, the existence of a "spiritual" sphere, in which the immaterial objects are located. This sphere and the objects therein contained are presented as the first-degree creation, in much closer contact with the divine creative force, whereas the material world and its natural sphere appear to be a function or a derivative of that

“spiritual” sphere. The natural sphere’s secondary character is expressed when Emerson describes it as a “symbol” having an “emblematic” function and locates it in the same functional ambience as language.

With regard to the question of how this primary sphere can be accessed, Emerson seems to succumb once again to the lack of consistency accused of by so many scholars and critics of his work. The passage quoted makes it rather clear, using the adverb “only,” that the materialization of the “spiritual” equivalents is to be understood as a process by which the former are “described” via the latter, which serve as “symbols” (Emerson 20). Constructing a chain of thought in which materialization is equivalent to a description of the original “spiritual fact” or “state of mind” (ibid.), Emerson makes clear that there is no other access to that immaterial, “spiritual” sphere but via the proxies of material manifestation; other than by way of regarding and analyzing the material manifestation of a “spiritual fact” in the natural sphere, there seems to be no other opportunity of grasping or comprehending the very same. And the grounds on which this linkage between materialization and comprehensibility seems to be prefaced concern chiefly visual processes, as material objects exposed to light usually have the property of being visible to the human eye. The last main clause introduced by the coordinating conjunction “and” makes this proposition specifically clear by putting forward that “that state of the mind can only be described by presenting that natural appearance as its picture” (Emerson 20).

As is to be read, Emerson once again invokes the concept of the “picture,” an object defined by its purpose to be visually perceived. This time, however, he does not employ it to reference the “instant eternity,” a sphere certainly most akin to that of the “spiritual facts” (Emerson 39) and which is accessible to every human being on the level of the “soul,” as shall be of importance later on. In contrast to such a view, the present passage seems to suggest that the content of that very sphere needs to be illustrated. This illustration, or the conversion of the immaterial objects into material ones, then manifests itself as a “picture” comprised of the natural phenomena of the material world. This line of reasoning implies that the gradient of transposition now flows reversely, that is to say not from the realm of the material to the realm of the immaterial, which allows to capture all of the past’s events in a simultaneous presence; much rather, the gradient now flows from the realm of the immaterial into matter.

At the same time, the access to those objects is left vitally transformed in this representation. At times, Emerson postulates that the access to the immaterial sphere is open to the human "soul," albeit in distinctly visual terms. Precisely this visual simultaneity Emerson presents as the illuminating feature allowing the individual to better understand the occurrences of the past in their larger contexts and impacts. In the present quote, however, it is the material manifestation that expresses, and therefore renders understandable, the immaterial "spiritual facts." While in some instances Emerson represents matter and the natural world with its concomitant passing of time as a hindrance to the understanding of the foundations of power relations in the present, inferior to a quasi-digital space in which immaterialized information could be stored for simultaneous access, the passage quoted qualifies that seemingly disparaging view of the natural, material sphere. In fact, material phenomena are granted to have explanatory power, too, rather than being obfuscating elements that impede the sight or knowledge of the eternal "spiritual facts" or "awful forms" (Emerson 39). This means that material representations of such immaterial phenomena do not necessarily only obstruct the recognition of facts about power structures, but can also be used to understand them better. The rather strong emphasis on the exclusivity of this representation's usefulness in the endeavour to understand and approach the immaterial with the adverb "only" seems to imply that this way of dealing with the material reality, namely using it to explicate the immaterial realm, is the more common method, compared to accessing the sphere of the source directly.

The admission that a system of representation such as the linguistic one, or the quasi-linguistic system of representation that Emerson identifies nature to be, betrays a rather more positive evaluation of inserting elements between the individual and the divine sphere than as corrupting elements, obfuscating the source of power and preventing the individual from interacting with it directly, and also from claiming it. Emerson presents an accumulation of metaphors to elucidate the thesis that "[p]articular natural facts are symbols of particular spiritual facts" (Emerson 20). In so doing, he locates those "spiritual facts" in the mental and emotional experience of the human being, suggesting that the thesis' main message is the circumstance that the whole of natural occurrences and objects serve as a mainly linguistic reservoir, or semantic field, from which the human being can draw signifiers to serve as vehicles for statements of a metaphorical character. These vehicles Emerson refers to as "pictures." Emerson thus continues to write:

> An enraged man is a lion, a cunning man is a fox, a firm man is a rock, a learned man is a torch. A lamb is innocence; a snake is subtle spite; flowers express to us the delicate affections. Light and darkness are our familiar expression for knowledge and ignorance; and heat for love. Visible distance behind and before us, is respectively our image of memory and hope. (Emerson 20, 21)

This parallelistic enumeration of metaphors seems to render the previously stated theses devoid of a metaphysical statement or import and express merely linguistic observations, namely that signifiers whose semantics pertain to the sphere of nature often find employment in speech in order to express mental or emotional states or properties. The quotidian character of the process of metaphorical language use once again foregrounds the helpful and even inevitable manner in which the principle of representation operates in every-day life. Again, the principle of representation is intimated to facilitate an understanding of otherwise possibly elusive material and immaterial occurrences as well as abstractions.

The emphasis on the customary facilitation of expression and understanding that Emerson states to be achieved by a specific kind of metaphorical language use also undermines the dichotomy of “direct” vs. “indirect” contact between the individual and the “spiritual fact” to be understood by that individual. As stated, the element inserted between the individual and the “spiritual fact” interestingly renders the latter more accessible to the former. This facilitation of accessibility implies that the inserted element of the vehicle operating in the metaphorical expression is not an opaque hindrance obfuscating the “spiritual fact,” but much rather a mediator that even improves the connection between the two communicating elements. This lack of obfuscation and the enhancement of a direct connection also find themselves expressed structurally in the form of the metaphor itself. The claim of identity or congruence between two elements proceeds in an unmediated way in the rhetoric device of the metaphor.

The absence of comparative prepositions characteristic for the metaphor’s statement of identity allows the principle of representation to retreat into the background. Instead of drawing attention to the fact that one signifier is used to represent another in order to render facets of both more visible, the metaphor suggests complete congruence of the

concepts that they stand for in their turn. What thus calibrates itself is a system of four elements, two concepts represented by two signifiers, one dyadic pair made to stand for the other. Yet this system of multiple insertions is claimed to enhance rather than impede clarity and comprehensibility. Of incidental interest is the increased employment of simile in contrast to metaphor that Jane Hodson identifies to characterize Paine's texts, and which she evaluates as "perhaps a reflection of the belief that they are more transparent than metaphors" (137). Hodson, nonetheless, is skeptical of this purported "transparence" of paine's "plain" language and still ascribes potentially "tyrannical" effects to Paine's manner of expression in its goal to persuade the reader (cf. 118). In a way, Emerson's main claim in asserting that representation facilitates clarity of understanding seems to be that it diminishes the degree of abstraction and transforms elusive conditions into evocative "pictures" that elicit determined readings on the basis of stared cultural narratives (cf. Emerson 20). Tying this observation back to a more politically informed viewpoint, one can state that Emerson's understanding of representation operates on the basis of an awareness of the abstractions and narrative constructions that are involved in creating and maintaining the construct of popular sovereignty. To once again echo Woloch, something like the "fiction of popular sovereignty" (22) is thus invoked by Emerson's positive depictions of representative mechanisms.

In contrast to Emerson, Paine denies the basic comprehensibility of the divine and does not permit of the possibility of aiding models or representations. To Paine, it seems important to insist on the fundamental impossibility to understand the godhead fully, in spite of engaging in thorough observation of the natural sphere as the site in which the divine finds its most immediate expression available to human kind. Paine formulates this conviction most poignantly when answering two hypothetical questions; the first of these questions is "canst thou by *searching* find out God?" (Paine, *The Age* 689). Paine answers this question in the affirmative adducing the necessity of a creator for objects that do not carry the reason for or beginning of their own existence within themselves. Here, Paine largely coincides with Emerson. The follow-up question, however, is where the two authors seem to diverge significantly: Paine asks "Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?" (Paine, *The Age* 689). He then denies such a possibility in the following manner:

> No, not only because the power and wisdom he has manifested in the structure of the creation that I behold, is to me incomprehensible; but because even this manifestation, great as it is, is probably but a small display of that immensity of power and wisdom, by which millions of other worlds, to me invisible by their distance, were created and continue to exist. (Paine, *The Age* 690)

In this passage, Paine prefaces the impossibility of comprehending the deity fully and "to perfection" on two characteristics that Paine infers from the observable natural sphere, both of which he interprets to exceed the human intellectual capacity to fully grasp. The first of these characteristics is the mere process of "creation" itself whose magnitude and oversight exceed any scale intellectually accessible to human understanding according to Paine. The second characteristic is the vastness of the product of the "creation" that probably exceeds human visual perception. Paine postulates that this impossibility to perceive the entirety of the natural sphere brought forth by the deity conditions the impossibility to comprehend the deity "to perfection."

Emerson does not permit of such nearly materialist pessimism regarding the human being's potential understanding of the godhead. As said, Emerson stresses the circumstance that objects and phenomena that defy human understanding on their own scale can be translated into smaller proportions as long as the structural analogy is upheld. Likewise, language itself can serve, and quite centrally so, as a mechanism that scales and explicates objects and phenomena otherwise inaccessible to human experience or intellect according to human needs. In that manner, Emerson operates on the assumption that there is no such thing as an object, concept, or phenomenon fundamentally and by definition outside of the human being's experience. If not through either the principle of analogy or the representative system of language in the immediate experience of the human being, the general comprehensibility of every concept, object, event, or phenomenon can still be, as shall be analyzed in greater detail in the third section, safeguarded through the immaterialization and transposition into "instant eternity" (Emerson 39), which serves as a virtual repository accessible to all "souls" (ibid.). Paine, in contrast to Emerson, does not understand himself to stand in the tradition of Idealist philosophy and hence does not resort to metaphysical assumptions featuring spheres of eternal ideas serving as virtual repositories. Instead, Paine comfortably proclaims the limits of human understanding and

apparently does not feel the need to resort to a favorable depiction, or in fact even a mentioning of devices that would render phenomena exceeding the human scale more readily comprehensible. In other words, rather than depicting different processes requiring representative mechanisms to mitigate the human being's inability to grasp and deal with phenomena of a certain scale, Paine adopts the feature of defying human understanding as a characteristic of the divine. To have direct access to the way in which the divine as the principle of power manifests itself in the natural sphere is therefore coterminous with accepting an ever limited grasp of the divine and of power. The fact that popular sovereignty is therefore truly a "fiction" brought about by an arbitrary negotiation becomes more clearly articulated. Paine seems to implicitly qualify democracy as itself a contingent attempt at organizing a society, divesting it of some of the naturalized claim to essential ascendancy over other systems of government that it certainly was to acquire over time.

Interfaces

The abovementioned disapproval that Paine expresses regarding the church's emphasis on the learning of languages is amplified when he dissertates on the topic of elements that Christianity determines to be interposed between the believer and the deity. With regard to the "christian system of faith" (Paine, *The Age* 690), Paine observes:

> It is a compound made up chiefly of manism with but little deism, and is as near to atheism as twilight is to darkness. It introduces between man and his maker an opaque body which it calls a redeemer; as the moon introduces her opaque self between the earth and the sun, and it produces by this means a religious or an irreligious eclipse of light. It has put the whole orb of reason into shade. (Paine, *The Age* 690, 691)

Processes of vision and sight and the vocabularies employed to reference these play an important role in Paine's criticism of Christianity in this passage. Paine introduces the neologism "manism" to express his disapproval of both, the aforementioned liberty that individuals took in designing the scriptures and the image of God according to their historically contingent needs as well as the centrality rendered to the figure of Jesus Christ,

himself appearing as a mortal man, in the "christian system of faith" (Paine, *The Age* 690). This twofold impact of and focus on man rather than on God is what justifies Christianity's classification as nearly atheist according to the author. Paine further illustrates his disapproval by constructing a simile that draws on the conventional binary opposition of "light" versus "darkness," in which the described "atheism" of Christianity with its insistence on a "redeemer" is likened to this dichotomy's negatively signified pole. At the same time, Paine's deist and Unitarian focus on a unified deity is implicitly set to correspond with the other, positively marked pole of the dichotomy, that is to say with "light."

Paine goes on to expand the metaphorical use of semantic fields that reference vision and transparence with regard to the classification of Christianity as removed from a deist truth about the deity and the deity's ideal relation to the individual. The neologism of "manism" receives further elaboration in the following statement about Christianity, in which Paine targets the figure and function of Christ. He terms the figure of the "redeemer" to be "an opaque body" that occupies a position "between man and his maker" (Paine, *The Age* 690). The author explicitly rejects the adoption of the Christian definition of Christ's function as a "redeemer" by phrasing his qualifying relative clause in a manner that makes his deliberate distancing from the view of Christ as a savior clear: The active verb emphasizes that Christianity "calls," that is to say only denominates, Christ a "redeemer." The main clause renders clear what function Paine ascribes to Christ, namely that of an obstruction of a direct passageway connecting the deity and the believer. Christ's explicit opacity intimates that this passageway is thought of as a distinctly visual one.

All in all, one of the core elements of the doctrine of the Trinity, namely the existence and paramount importance of an entity to intervene between the believer and the deity representing the father assumes the role of the main constituent worthy of criticism for Paine. The ground on which he so strongly opposes the constituent of the "redeemer" in this instant is the obstruction of the "light" that comes from the deity (Paine, *The Age* 690). Furthermore, the simile that likens the "redeemer" to the "moon" and the deity to the "sun" foregrounds the explicit likening of "light" to "reason," which is a common metaphorical formation of the Age of Enlightenment. The entity constructed by Christian doctrine to be positioned between the believers and the deity, in its metaphorical rendition as a particular constellation of cosmic bodies, causes "a religious or an irreligious eclipse of light" that "has put the whole orb of reason into shade" (Paine, *The Age* 690, 691). On the ground of the

equation of “light” and “reason,” this passage iterates Paine’s accusation of Christianity as responsible for an obscurantism generally implied to inform societies that base social and scientific norms on the premises of that faith. Yet the astronomical vocabulary previously used also indicates an equation of the source of light with God, and thus of God with the “orb of reason.” This juxtaposition is, as previously explained, a core tenet of scientific deism, but does not exhaust the meaning of the nouns connected to the processes of sight and vision in this passage.

Being the main condition of vision, “light” can also be read in precisely this role in this passage. To render it clearer, I suggest to interpret “light” as metonymically primarily related to and significant of sight and vision. Defining Jesus Christ as “an opaque body” expresses Paine’s reproach towards Christianity for obstructing the direct line of vision between the individual and the deity. Especially the manner in which the deity is referenced, namely in relation to the individual as “his maker” (Paine, *The Age* 690), points to the question of authority as significant in this respect. Following Paine’s line of thought it must be inferred that Jesus Christ is introduced into the system of vision in order to obstruct the line of sight between the individuals and the deity, and by that token between the individuals and the authority under which they exist and to which they respond. In other words, the deity does not only represent the concept of reason and of a creative principle; the deity connotes authority by the very same token.

Paine’s refusal to accept the divinity of Jesus Christ is not solely based on the aforementioned lack of evidence and the rejection of basing belief on “hearsay” (cf. Paine, *The Ag*e 667, 668). Paine’s criticism of the acceptance of Jesus Christ as a deity and part of a divine Trinity points to a problem regarding the structural adjustment of the figure of Christ into Paine’s particular configuration of the ideal and normative conditions of sight and vision. Paine’s critical focus on the opaqueness of Jesus Christ in the constellation introduced intimates that either the transparency or the complete absence of intercession in the visual connection to God as the source of reason, creation, and authority is required to fulfill the mandates of his normative construction of a relation between the believers and the deity.

Interestingly, Deleuze and Guattari have been criticized to reiterate hegemonic practices in *A Thousand Plateaus* when it comes to the mechanisms of representation. Those hegemonic representational practices actualize themselves first and foremost in the philosophers’ treatment of “nomadology” as a counter-design to processes structuring

Western societies. As Christopher L. Miller points out in "The Postidentitarian Predicament in the Footnotes of A Thousand Plateaus: Nomadology, Anthropology, and Authority," Deleuze and Guattari's approach to enthnographical matters has to be evaluated as "quite old-fashioned" (13) as it engages a kind of "anthropology" that "represents those who do not represent themselves to the presumed addressee of anthropological discourse – the Western reader" (ibid. 12). Hence, it may well be said that certain contradictions concerning the projected design of alternatives also find their way into Deleuze and Guattari's outlines via their adherence to hegemonically positioned anthropological methodologies. To apply Paine's criticism of textual insertions to the problem at hand, one could state that these methodologies induce the philosophers to insert their texts between the readers and a represented subject to which they themselves had only access by "hearsay," i. e. through other sources compiled in a traditionalist and hegemonic mode.

Emerson's dissertations on the topic of interfaces inserting themselves between the individual and the divine are not as inclined to point to the practice of intercession as condemnable. In line with his rather more favorable depiction of the linguistic system of representation and of analogy in general, Emerson focuses on the favorable traits of a system of ever increasing layers of intercession between the deity and the believer:

> This universal soul, he calls Reason: it is not mine, or thine, or his, but we are its; we are its property and men. And the blue sky in which the private earth is buried, the sky with its eternal calm, and full of everlasting orbs, is the type of Reason. That which, intellectually considered, we call Reason, considered in relation to nature, we call Spirit. Spirit is the Creator. Spirit hath life in itself. And man in all ages and countries, embodies it in his language, as the FATHER. (Emerson 21)

This passage is striking on account of the increasingly particular character of Emerson's conclusion of the chain of expression, or rather analogy or representation. The final element of this chain representation is the very specific signifier of "the FATHER," a noun Emerson emphasizes by using capitalization. The specificity of this last element is particularly noteworthy when considering the fact that it is a signifier that points to the diffuse principle of divine creativity that forms the first element of that chain of representation. The abstract notion of the "universal soul" stands at the beginning of what could be understood as a cascade of the concept of the divine from a fairly high level of abstraction into ever greater

degrees of specificity. In that manner, he abstraction of this concept of the "universal soul" is somewhat reduced by vesting it in the signifier of "Reason," which, while still abstract and lacking the specificity of a concrete and determined person or object, is wont to be more germane to the experience of the reader. The still abstract notion of "Reason" is, after all, bound to a signifier with some currency that can activate a consensus understanding regarding its potentials of meaning.

Surely, one can assume that this noun's meaning that has more widespread currency and denotes the capability to carry out logical intellectual operations, in the sense employed by Paine, may not be entirely congruent with the meaning that it is intended to unfold in the context of a specifically philosophical, and some extent theological, tract. As Emerson often imbues the said signifier with a metaphysical content by juxtaposing it with the "universal soul," the more distinctly theological meaning of the signifier "Reason" can also be assumed to operate in this passage, especially regarding Emerson's biographical connection to the Unitarian ministry and the concomitant theological terminology. This rather more theological import of the signifier of "Reason" as potentially "logos" is also what markedly separates it from the use of the same signifier by Paine. While Paine is sometimes pointed out to have engaged in itinerant preaching himself by some of his biographers (cf. Davidson and Scheick 28), he had no thoroughgoing professional connection to the ministry or to the study of a professional practice of theology. Self-consciously rooted in the discourses of European Enlightenment, Paine does not try to intentionally activate any semantic aspects related to theological traditions when he references "Reason" – as he so prominently does in the title of the tract under present advisement. Paine's reference to "Reason," in this respect, seems to connote practices and attitudes exactly opposite to Emerson's reference to the same. While Paine's "Reason" is commonly read to stand for the Enlightenment and its proclaimed values, Emerson's "Reason" seems to denote a particular aspect of the deity, akin to the distinct divine person of Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit in Trinitarian Christian doctrine.

This affiliation of "Reason" and "Spirit" is explicitly present in the passage quoted, as "Spirit" is the third element in that cascade of representation. Again, Emerson achieves a reduction of abstraction and therefore a disambiguation of the previous element of "Reason." As explained, "Reason" can have multiple meanings, theological, metaphysical, as well as mundane ones. By choosing the signifier of "Spirit" as the next link in that chain,

Emerson steers the reading into the direction of theology and metaphysical philosophy. Emerson justifies the introduction of this signifier into the chain by constructing a demarcation between the "intellect" and "nature," locating "Reason" in the realm of the former and "Spirit" in the realm of the latter. The gradient of increasing specificity is thus defined to flow from the immaterial to the material – a definition with which Emerson once again employs and hones his specific brand of Transcendentalist Idealism.

Having refocused the concept of the immaterial and rather diffuse divine on the religious and specifically Christian theological semantic reservoirs, Emerson continues the specification. The fourth element of the chain of representation constructed in the quoted passage acquires the quality of an agent, namely "the Creator." This further increase in specificity not only channels the diffuse concept of the "Spirit" and "Reason" into the more concrete shape of a "Creator," it also continues and reinforces the theological semanticization of the more ambiguous concepts of the "universal soul" and "Reason." After all, the term "the Creator" is commonly used as a synonym for the deity and, as such, even features prominently in the founding documents of the United States. The metaphorical statement of "Spirit is the Creator" not only echoes conceptions of the deity that had great currency during the periods of the Early Republic and the Antebellum, it also introduces a personification to the concept of the divine employed in *Nature*, the chief principle on which the specification operates in this fourth element of the chain. To put differently, it is the personification of the diffuse conceptions of the divine such as "Reason" and "Spirit" that function as a basis for the introduction of aspects such as agency to the concept of the divine in this instance.

Finally, the fifth element in that chain of representation is likewise the climax of specificity, also on the basis of personification, in the order constructed by Emerson. That culmination of specificity in the fifth element is expressed by virtue of the familial term of "the FATHER." Reducing the chain here constructed to only the first and the last of its elements, one arrives at the proposition that the "universal soul" as the most pristine and therefore diffused state of the deity expresses itself on the most specific, linguistic level in the form of "the FATHER." That latter element is thus the most accessible and most readily comprehensible expression of the divine. To point out another aspect of the same conceptual dependence constructed here, the concept and concrete figure of "the father" is made to function as the representative of the godhead in the realm of the material.

Three of the five elements echo the elements of the Trinity, namely "Reason," if taken to stand for *logos* and therefore the Son, "Spirit," and finally the "father." The construction of these three concepts as aspects or different understandings and relations of the same divine "universal soul" rather than as three distinct beings existing and operating simultaneously marks Emerson's stance as distinctly Unitarian in this instance. This semantic overlap facilitates an extension of ambiguity not only to the signifier of "Reason," which can have both a distinctly theological and a more mundane meaning; it also applies to the signifier of the "father," whose different aspects of meaning are structured in similar ways. On the one hand, "father" seems to denote first and foremost a familial relation, but at the same time it has a distinctly theological meaning as a reference to God's personhood as father in the Trinitarian conception. While Trinitarian conceptions of the deity postulate that the three distinct persons of the Trinity constitute the deity simultaneously and distinctly (cf. Ayer 142, Chafer 6), Emerson's brand of Unitarianism postulates that it is always the divine "universal soul" that can express itself differently depending on the relation which it incurs. Operating with the "father" is thus not operating with the godhead directly, but with one representation of the godhead embodied specifically for human understanding. Interestingly, the Unitarian concept of the different aspects of the divine is in this manner used here to construct different interfaces through which to perceive the "universal soul" and which mediate between the very same and the individual.

Corresponding to Emerson's focus on the role of language in explicating the divine, the entire chain operates on the basis of an awareness of the importance of language and linguistic representation: Emerson links the elements of this chain by pointing out that they are used either as synonyms in speech, particularly in the English language, or that one element is employed to reference the previous one. In this manner, Emerson formulates regarding the signifiers of which the human being disposes to designate the divine that "[t]his universal soul, he calls Reason" and that "[t]hat which, intellectually considered, we call Reason, considered in relation to nature, we call Spirit." Finally, the last element of "the FATHER" receives the longest circumlocution regarding the processes of linguistic representation at play. Particularly interesting about this circumlocution is the metaphorical use of the concept of "embodiment" in order to reference linguistic representation. Rather than continuing to refer to this process by way of employing the verb "to call" in a manner

parallelistic to the previous statements, Emerson now states regarding the expression of the godhead that the human being "embodies it in his language, as the FATHER."

This formulation bestows a very plastic character onto the linguistic process referenced and thereby highlights this last element against the backdrop of the previous four. This metaphorical use of the concept of "embodiment" as a vehicle for the process of linguistic representation also enhances the specification and the personification achieved by expressing the divine through the familial term of "father." In that chain of representation, the "father" is the only signifier pointing to a referent in the non-linguistic world that can actually possess a material, physical body. Hence, when Emerson uses the phrase "embodies it in his language" to render the human being's expression of the divine in words, a certain ambiguity asserts itself. On the one hand, Emerson first and foremost chooses this expression to communicate what it purports to communicate at first glance, namely that the signifier of "the FATHER" finds use in order to render in concrete words the diffuse principle of the divine. Having the propositions in mind with which Emerson prefaces the chapter on "Language" in which the quote in question is located, one is also aware of Emerson's postulation that the natural world itself is to be understood as a kind of language that with its material phenomena gives expression to the quoted "spiritual facts." In the context of this proposition the image of an embodiment in or through language ceases to be bound to language in the strict sense, as the natural world presents itself as a language of sorts in Emerson's expositions. The conception of nature as a language of sorts thus can bereave the image of an embodiment through language of its metaphorical aspect of meaning and is seemingly applicable to the non-linguistic material world of referents. While Emerson seems to try underlining the merely linguistic aspect of meaning by naming "man" rather than a higher divine agent as the author of this particular kind of expression, the line of demarcation between the realm of language in the strict sense and the natural world in its conception as following quasi-linguistic principles of representation is a highly permeable one in this instance.

Particularly noteworthy is the circumstance that the representative element of the "father" is also framed as part of that useful and beneficial chain of links that facilitate the comprehension of the divine. Taking into account the noted permeability between the linguistic and the non-linguistic reality in this example, one cannot but note the conspicuous character of Emerson's choice to frame a particular human being, namely the "father," as an

expression of the divine in terms so uncritical, if not outright affirmative. In effect, Emerson postulates that the position of the paternal figure between the individual and several other expressions of the divine is a matter of course and not at all to be criticized. Rather than casting the "father" as an intervening, blocking element that impedes direct access to the divine and the concomitant processes of interaction and becoming between the divine and the individual, Emerson constructs this figure as the most concrete, and therefore most accessible, representative of power. This familial term used in the context of theology and translated into the context of politics clearly inserts itself into hetero-patriarchal and paternalistic power structures that, again, operate on the political exclusion of the other as defined in opposition to normativized masculinity.

The fact that Emerson ends the chain with the signifier "the father" seems to resonate well with the agenda of Jackson's cabinet. The "father" as the most concrete representative of divine power seems to stand in homological relation to the president as the most emblematic representative of executive political power and the quasi-sovereign of the political system. The conception of the president as quasi-sovereign also gave rise to an resonated well with the appellation of "King Andrew," bestowed upon Jackson by his critics who saw the projected accumulation of power in the presidency as a worrying and anti-democratic development.

Histories

Not only the figure of Jesus Christ is represented as an intervening body impeding a direct, transparent relationship between the deity and the individual; Paine ascribes the same role of an intervening body rendering the connection between the godhead and the individual more opaque to the Bible itself. He does so by explicating his conception of the past as a sphere to which direct, visual access is not possible, while at the same time stating that Biblical texts are histories rather than revelations:

> Jesus Christ wrote no account of himself, of his birth, parentage, or anything else. Not a line of what is called the New Testament is of his writing. The history of him is altogether the work of other people; and as to the account given of his resurrection and ascension, it was the necessary counterpart to the story of his birth. His historians, having brought him into the world in a supernatural manner, were obliged

> to take him out again in the same manner, or the first part of the story must have fallen to the ground. (Paine, *The Age* 670)

In this passage, Paine positions the human authors in an interesting way, which serves both to challenge the authenticity of the Bible as well as to present his critical view of those who insist upon founding authority on past events. Calling the authors "historians," Paine insists that they had no immediate knowledge of the life of Jesus Christ, in this manner undermining their authoritative stance. At the same time, by referring to them with the technical term that denominates individuals engaged in the scholarly study and narration of past events which they, usually, have not witnessed themselves, Paine draws a parallel to political arguments made previously in both *The Age of Reason* and *Rights of Man*. To be more precise, in this instance and by employing this particular term, Paine can be read to reference the argument regarding the inadmissibility of social and political contracts that are meant to last forever. Paine formulates this postulation emphatically in *Rights of Man*:

> There never did, there never will, and there never can exist a parliament, or any description of men, or any generation of men, in any country, possessed of the right or the power of binding and controuling [sic!] posterity to the "*end of time,*" or of commanding for ever how the world shall be governed, or who shall govern it: and therefore all such clauses, acts or declarations, by which the makers of them attempt to do what they have neither the right nor the power to do, nor the power to execute, are in themselves null and void. Ever age and generation must be as free to act for itself, *in all cases*, as the ages and generations which preceded it. The vanity and presumption of governing beyond the grave, is the most ridiculous and insolent of all tyrannies. (438; emphases in the original)

If such contracts were to outlast the generation that forged them, subsequent generations and constituencies would be denied the right to negotiate modalities more suitable for their particular conditions of living, finding themselves subjected to provisions which lack an immediate relation to their particular reality instead. Therefore, those who argue for the continuation of certain group privileges basing themselves in history are guilty, according to Paine, of perpetuating legal and political conditions of the past that are divorced from the

living conditions of the present, as "[i]t is the living, and not the dead, that are to be accommodated" (Paine, *Rights* 438). This line of argument in Paine's texts betrays, generally speaking, a critical view of the practice of claiming authority by referring to past conditions, upon which one had no influence. In *The Age of Reason*, Paine intimates that the authors of the Bible employ a similar practice to that criticized in *Rights of Man*. The professional and occupational designation of "historian" becomes thus negatively charged, connoting the construction of non-verifiable narratives employed to legitimize power under the guise of received and agreed-upon norms. To sum up, Paine claims that the immediacy of authorship of Biblical texts cannot be guaranteed, and since the authors of the events are intimated by Paine to have been precluded from witnessing any of the events described, the term "historian" acquires a derogatory meaning.

This passage, equally, betrays a criticism of the concrete claims to "the divine right to govern" at the core of the discourses employed by monarchic dynasties to legitimize their rule (cf. Paine, *Rights* 440). Ricketson and Wilson discern the aforementioned impact of John Locke's insistence on "the importance of experience" in Paine's depiction of Jesus Christ; as they put it, "Paine might go to Jerusalem or even die on a cross as Jesus did, but he could not ascend to heaven. All those things which could not be verified by repetition, Paine termed unnatural" (87). While Paine's biographers establish as his main tool of verification the test of experience, thereby once again locating him in the context of Enlightenment thought, I propose to abstract the depiction and at the same time render more attention to the vocabularies of vision in this instance. It is in precisely this vein of an insistence on verification that the "supernatural" origin and death of Jesus Christ are categorized by Paine as fictitious elements, whose only function is to serve the needs of a particular narrative construction that relies on claims that are not to be verified in order to establish authoritative claims to power. Supernatural elements that are asserted to defy visual perception and thereby verification are thus unmasked to perform as deflecting devices of sorts, enabling the defenders of the Biblical narrative to sidetrack demands for material proof of their metaphysical claims as well as of their claims to power. Especially the narrative element of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception receives Paine's attention in that regard:

> The wretched contrivance with which this latter part is told, exceeds everything that went before it. The first part, that of the miraculous conception, was not a thing that admitted of publicity; and therefore the tellers of this part of the story had this advantage, that though they might not be credited, they could not be detected. They could not be expected to prove it, because it was not one of those things that admitted of proof, and it was impossible that the person of whom it was told could prove it himself. (Paine, *The Age* 670)

The lack of an opportunity to establish a visual connection with the occurrence claimed by the Bible is the particular feature discrediting the account most to Paine. He regards this lack as an intentionally constructed feature that operates in favor of those who seek to legitimate authority from the account. The inherent lack of "publicity" of the "miraculous conception" functions as an "advantage" inasmuch as the uncovering of the potential and probable lie at the heart of the narration cannot be conclusively carried out. This lack of "publicity" or public visibility of the occurrence in question thereby secures the impunity of the authors or "tellers," as the pretended conception, by virtue of its inherent seclusion from public sight, "was not one of those things that admitted of proof."

It is also of interest that Paine, in this particular instance, denominates the individuals who gave the account of the "miraculous conception" as "tellers" rather than authors or poets or presumed witnesses. Thereby, again, Paine makes the argument for the lack of immediacy between the occurrence described and the individuals who describe it. Emphasizing the act of oral communication and iteration, Paine's semantic choice highlights the one-sidedness of the process by which knowledge of the "miraculous conception" is produced. Any authority that a truthful reproduction might bestow on those who inform the public on this account is thereby questioned, as the individuals concerned are mere "tellers" rather than reporters of events that they witnessed first-hand.

Paine also establishes a direct relationship between the concepts of "publicity" and "proof," the former being defined as a vital element of any procedure to arrive at the latter. In contrast to the incident of the Immaculate Conception, which Paine unmasks as intentionally defying the material preconditions necessary to be proved by visual witnessing for reasons of power preservation, the author adduces spectacular and therefore potentially verifiable events related in the Bible. Again, he formulates the characteristic of "publicity" to

be the major criterion employed to substantiate or negate the narrative as presented by the Biblical text. In this instance, the spectacular event in question is the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

> But the resurrection of a dead person from the grave, and his ascension through the air, is a thing very different, as to the evidence it admits of, to the invisible conception of a child in the womb. The resurrection and ascension, supposing them to have taken place, admitted of public and ocular demonstration, like that of the ascension of a balloon, or the sun at noon day, to all Jerusalem at least. A thing which everybody is required to believe, requires that the proof and evidence of it should be equal to all, and universal; and as the public visibility of this last related act was the only evidence that could give sanction to the former part, the whole of it falls to the ground, because that evidence never was given. (Paine, *The Age* 670)

Referring to the presumably spectacular occurrence related to have happened after Jesus' crucifixion and death, Paine examines and evaluates the circumstances under which the Biblical account could acquire credibility. In order to do so, he contrasts Jesus' death with the claims regarding his conception, concluding that while the latter was by definition not to be watched by any potential witness, the latter must have been verified by multiple accounts. The key to understanding and following this conclusion is an appraisal of the importance of visibility to Paine's argumentation. Paine writes of the "invisible conception of a child in the womb," using the adjective to describe in nearly pleonastic fashion the process in question, naming "the womb" explicitly as its location. The anatomically determined superficial invisibility of the organ, and thereby of the process taking place therein, constitute the main basis for Paine's distrust concerning the account. Juxtaposed, there is Jesus' "ascension through the air," which is likened to "the ascension of a balloon" and "the sun at noon day." In contrast to the conception, this process would have, potentially, admitted of being witnessed, thereby rendering itself better to function as the foundation of authority.

Especially the comparison of Jesus ascending to "the sun at noon day" renders clear the frame of reference important to Paine: He refers the components of the Biblical account to natural phenomena familiar to any readership, at the same time introducing the authority

he deems solely worthy of belief, namely observable and measurable natural facts normally being the domain of the natural sciences, which Paine calls the "true theology" (*The Age* 691), later on. The same logic applies to the comparison of the ascension of Jesus with that of a "balloon," referring the constituents of the Biblical narrative to a man-made fact and a product related to the natural sciences and engineering. Paine treats Jesus like a material object, pertaining to the world of natural phenomena, whose existence and particular location must permit measuring and verification by a number of distinct observers, or as Paine puts it, "public and ocular demonstration." The fact that *The Age of Reason* is deeply informed by the science of astronomy grows patent again, as the visual observation of natural phenomena, just as the ascension moves to the center of concern. As Larkin points out, Paine's "scientific training makes him particularly suspicious of any standards of evidence where a single individual's testimony of status serves as the foundation for establishing a truth" (138).

At the same time it must be kept in mind that the kind of observation Paine advocates in this passage is not scientific in the sense of being limited to expert scientists, but decidedly "public," meaning directly accessible to all and, potentially, being carried out by all capable of sight. In this way, the adjectives "public and ocular" are defined as the two most compelling qualities of the verification of an event, and in the particular case of the Bible, this type of visual perception potentially accessible to and materially undertaken by a variety of observers would be the only ground on which to rest divine authority presumably manifest in the event of Jesus' ascension. It is "public visibility" that Paine defines as producing the kind of "evidence" that is "equal to all" and therefore "universal." As Larkin notes examining Paine's rendition and discussion of the resurrection, "[t]ruth, according to this standard, must always be public" (139).

The equation erected between visibility and equality is of particular interest as Paine's main thesis underlying the argument. This implies that in Paine's view, only the faculty of sight endows different individuals with a justly distributed access to the faculty of consenting consciously to power. It is only "public visibility" that can "give sanction" to the claims of the powerful. In this line, Paine argues that only the visual verification of the ascension could have rendered the mode of Jesus's conception believable, but by virtue of the absence of visual proof potentially accessible to all, "the whole of it falls to the ground."

This metaphoric "fall" of the Biblical claims seems to be an astute play of words establishing a contrasting relation to the presumed elevation of Jesus during his ascension. Hence, this fall can be read as a metaphor for the loss of authority of the Biblical claim after its deconstruction by the author. For it is the height of the ascension that would have guaranteed "public visibility" and "evidence" for the claims on which Biblical authority rests. By "fall[ing] to the ground" it can be said that "the whole of it" is removed from sight, and therefore from justification.

Emerson vests the problem addressed by his tract in a vocabulary chiefly drawing on the semantic field of vision from the outset, introducing his argument by applying those vocabularies to a temporal, historical dimension:

> Our age is retrospective. It builds the sepulchres of the fathers. It writes biographies, histories, and criticism. The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we, through their eyes. Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs? Embosomed for a season in nature, whose floods of life stream around and through us, and invite us by the powers they supply, to action proportioned to nature, why should we grope among the dry bones of the past, or put the living generation into masquerade out of its faded wardrobe? The sun shines to-day also. There is more wool and flax in the fields. There are new lands, new men, new thoughts. Let us demand our own works and laws and worship. (Emerson 7)

The first sentence of *Nature*'s "Introduction" and thereby the beginning of the tract as a whole establishes the observation that "[o]ur age is retrospective" as the main grievance. This vector of attention toward the past is identified as inhibiting due attention to the present, thereby rendering the contact with the present less direct and less intense. This formulation of the grievance of too dominant a retrospection, or orientation toward the past, can be read as an implicit imperative to create structures that foster more direct contact between its respective elements. Especially the succession of rhetorical questions renders visible the imperative to create such an alternative environment differing from present conditions dominated by the said retrospection.

As the first sentence reveals already, vocabularies pertaining to sight are of central importance in expressing this discontent with a lack of immediacy. Emerson chooses expressions pertaining distinctly to the semantic field of vision to express the discontent with the lack of orientation towards the present on account of the undue reverence for the past. What could be cast aside a merely metaphorical choice of words does, however, impact the perception of the grievance and adds unto one further, namely distinctly visual aspect of meaning: Not only the concern with the past and its conventions is thus presented as a grievance, but also the manner of interacting with the present, and specifically this interaction's facets pertaining to sight. In other words, it is the lack of immediate vision directed at the present surroundings that is also among the concerns of the statement of discontent. Hence, descriptions of the commendable visual engagement as "face to face" are more than simply metaphorical renditions of an imperative to boldly leave behind the conventions of the past, but designate a quality of interaction with the environment in its own right. This quality is one of direct and quasi-personal visual contact. The same can be said for the statement of "[t]he sun shines to-day also." The sun as the primary natural source of light and therefore the precondition for vision or visual contact receives an emphasis in its existing contemporary presence. In this manner, Emerson seems to admonish the reader, or more specifically "our age" with regard to the implied antebellum readership, to recognize that the conditions for a direct visual interaction with one's present environs are in place.

It is of particular interest that the spheres between which this direct visual interaction is to be established are referred to in hyperonymic terms pertaining to the semantic field of the divine. The succession of the terms "God," "nature," and "universe" establishes a paradigm in which these nouns acquire an almost synonymous meaning. At the same time, they also represent the present time in contradistinction to the lamented retrospection's focus on the past. Thus, all three terms are presented as the spheres with which immediate relationships should exist.

The subsequent rhetorical questions also present the questions of direct contact in a vocabulary that creates a connection between the field of vision and the field of the divine. In particular, those questions indicate in which areas of human experience this alternative quality of direct connectivity can be expected to exude its beneficial effect. In the first rhetorical question, the imperative of an "original relation to the universe" designates the

desired immediacy or immediate access to the sphere of the divine in most general terms. The subsequent two rhetorical questions specify the character of this potential "original" relation further. Thus, the second question takes up the practices of "poetry," "philosophy," and "religion," all three of which Emerson at some point postulates to represent attempts at arriving at a codification or expression of metaphysical principles, inspired by the power of the divine. Regarding the practices of "poetry and philosophy," expressed here in the shape of a visual if not phonetic alliteration to effectively mark heir juxtaposition, the author postulates "insight" as more preferable to "tradition." The noun chosen to contrast direct, immediate understanding or access to the topics of "poetry and philosophy" with the mediation of previous instances refers directly to vision: By choosing the noun "insight" the author references a direct, sensory witnessing of the subject matters treated. As "insight" designates processes of understanding and knowledge even more than those of visual perception, which it entails etymologically, a relation between immediate, not obstructed sight and knowledge is created.

The term with which "insight" is directly contrasted and against which it is privileged reads "tradition." Here, Emerson takes up a grievance particularly relevant to Paine, namely the handing down of knowledge and the lack of an unmediated experience of that which is to be known. Emerson, just like Paine, continues to formulate that same lament for the realm of religious experience, asking for "a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs." Here, Emerson expresses the need for an unmediated experience of the deity as the starting point of all religious belief and practice, and experience that would have rendered the need for "tradition" and the handing down of knowledge by previous generations irrelevant to the immediate experience of the world. Interestingly, the concept used to contrast and elevate the process of "revelation" against is "history." Since "history" is identified as part of the problematic detachment from the world and from the deity, a certain disparaging note is to be felt when reading this passage. In other words, "history" is what keeps the present generations from experiencing the deity first-hand and what relegates experience as such to the secondary degree of partaking of reports rather than events. Calling to mind the derogatory fashion in which Paine refers to "historians" (*The Age* 670), meaning those who claim to have experienced the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the reader cannot but feel reminded of the same problem that seems to be motivating both texts. Both authors use the theological concepts of "revelation" and "tradition" as well as

"history" to formulate the lack of direct connection between the individual and the object to be known in the face of a temporal distance between these two, as well as in the face of authority figures who insert themselves between the two as a type of interface. Experiencing the report of the object rather than experiencing the object is the condition of the individual that both, Paine and Emerson seem to deplore.

One might argue that Paine is more poignant in formulating the connection between oppressive political regimes of power and the practice of inhibiting a direct connection between the individual and the source of power. After all, Paine's *The Age of Reason* is expressly addressed to an entire nation and formulates its goal as engaging this nation in a serious deliberative process regarding the claims of religion and the consequences of these claims – "To my fellow citizens of the United States of America. I put the following work under your protection. It contains my opinion upon Religion" (Paine, *The Age* 665) as an introductory remark puts the tract into a very particular sociopolitical and historical context. Emerson's interest, however, is not formulated in as poignantly a manner. The quoted paragraph could be read, in fact, to suggest that *Nature* is desired to be utterly apolitical, which one could not maintain about Paine's *The Age of Reason*. Emerson's purpose of writing as disclosed further on in the introductory chapter is to "inquire, to what end is nature?" (7). This interest in the purpose of the natural world seems to be purely theoretical and, potentially, of philosophical or aesthetic import, as Emerson also explicitly asks for "a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition" (7).

Forwarding the reading to the last two sentences of Emerson's introductory paragraph, however, one realizes that the tone of Emerson's writing can acquire, if not an openly and aggressively political tone, at least a political undertone and can indeed express demands of a potentially political significance. Thus, when Emerson writes that "[t]hese are new lands, new men, new thoughts. Let us demand our own works and laws and worship" (7), more than merely philosophical, aesthetic, or theoretical considerations seem to be at stake for him. The three polysyndetically linked nouns of "our own works and laws and worship" entail political relevance. What unfolds its effect first within the confines of an isotopy that pertains to the "laws" of nature, informed by divine power, and the individual's and the current generation's position in that context, can as well be read as a call for change that comprises the spheres of the social and the political. Especially the forceful exhortation of "[l]et us demand" establishes Emerson's interest as directed to a change in more than

attitude. This exhortation adds urgency to his foregoing elaborations and hints to a conviction that more fundamental and material conditions must be impacted, and that a philosophical inquiry into the purpose of the natural world, but also a critical look at the extent to which the individual is directly and immediately implicated into nature, are the points of departure in order to effectuate that very impact.

Of the three elements in the said polysyndeton, the noun "laws" most obviously reveals a connection to a semantic field pertaining to politics. As the codices that regulate social and political processes, "laws" are a vital element impacting the material conditions of any society. Hence, the imperative to "demand" them instead of accepting those instituted by previous generations or enacted without the participation of those who have to bear the eventual effects of these very laws is a thoroughly political gesture. In this instance, the call for an immediate impact on the laws that the current generation has to endure is expressed through the possessive pronoun and adjective of "our own." Designating a possessive relation between the individuals pertaining to the current generation and the tokens of power of the "laws," Emerson underlines the necessity of an intervention on behalf of a direct relation between people and laws. In this regard, Emerson's exhortation can very well be read as an imperative to take political action to benefit processes of greater democratic participation.

The import of the other two elements of the polysyndeton can be read as no less political. When Emerson calls on the readers to "demand our own works" and also "worship," he seems to reference both production and religion, spheres that have never been utterly devoid of political importance. Read broadly, "works" can refer to the "poetry and philosophy" demanded by Emerson previously, and designate primarily the end results of human intellectual efforts. Instead of elevating the "works" of past generations, the current generation, according to Emerson, must be productive itself, bringing about "works" of its own design, products of its own interactions with its environs and society. However, the fact that Emerson calls for the readers to "demand" their "own works" points to a level of meaning that is slightly outside of a definition that locates "works" as fully within the individual sphere of impact. Much rather, "works," though the plural possessive pronoun "our" attributes them to the members of the current generation, which are also identified with the readers, are to be demanded, by implication, from somebody else. In other words,

the conditions for the production of "our own works," just like for the "laws and worship" Emerson speaks of, must first be wrestled from or at least negotiated with another entity.

While that entity from whom the said condition must be wrestled is not explicitly named, the previous relegation of "tradition" and "history" to second rank after the privileged "insight" and "revelation" points to the previous generations as a part of that entity. To put the matter yet another way, one could argue that Emerson presents a picture of current society in which the conditions brought about by convention, or by "tradition" and "history," now impede a meaningful participation and self-expression of the current generation. When turning to the last element of the polysyndeton, namely "worship," the reader is reminded of a similar argument regarding the hindrance that connections of past times can present to current participation. Taking up his previous lament regarding the lack of "revelation" and the predominance of "history" in the sphere of religion, Emerson calls for, or rather again encourages the call for a new kind of religion. Again, this religion's main element would be its clear attribution to the members of the current generation, as well as its concomitant facilitation of a more direct experience of the divine and its disregard for the conventions of the past.

To return to Paine's negotiation of the role of the codified past in relations of power, one can note that similar to "historians," "prophets" too receive a reevaluation of roles with regard to their position between both the individual and the deity as well as between the individual and verifiable, material fact. Paine undertakes a fundamental change of focus when it comes to understanding the meaning of the noun "prophet," deviating substantially from the meaning suggested by the Bible:

> If by a prophet we are to suppose a man to whom the Almighty communicated some event that would take place in future, either there were such men, or there were not. If there were, it is consistent to believe that the event so communicated would be told in terms that could be understood, and not related in such a loose and obscure manner as to be out of the comprehension of those that heard it, and so equivocal as to fit almost any circumstance that may happen afterward. It is conceiving very irreverently of the Almighty, to suppose that he would deal in this jesting manner with mankind, yet all the things called prophecies in the book called the Bible come under this description. (Paine, *The Age* 717, 718)

Once again, this passage makes clear that the criticism Paine directs at the Biblical representation of communication between the deity, or the authority, and the individual is primarily caused by the language-centered character thereof. Reading this passage, one arrives at the conclusion that the very central role of language and its inherent qualities lie at the center of the shortcomings of such a communication as identified by Paine. He first describes the acceptable manner of the linguistic transmission of information, which proceeds "in terms that could be understood." The relative clause modifying and explaining the noun "terms" already points to the necessity of clear definitions and exclusions. This hints to the fact that the linguistic code, chosen for the transmission of information in the case of the Bible and of religious doctrine, is not designed to transmit solely referential information in unambiguous ways.

The present passage deals also with aspects of, particularly, Biblical language in its relation to the characteristic of immediacy and transparency. The figure of the "prophet" now serves to elucidate the problems of a Biblical model of communication between believers and the deity, or, on a more abstracted plane, between the individual and authority. In this instance, Paine's strategy is interesting, as he does not seem to oppose the concept and the potential existence of "prophets" with the characteristic vehemence, at first. Here, Paine chooses a seemingly dispassionate approach and provides a definition of the term in question. The very fact that this definition coincides with the Biblical definition of the term already points to the matter-of-fact attitude on which his argument rests in this passage, for he agrees to suspend for the time being the insistence on that definition which he presented in earlier passages of the text. Instead of further maintaining that the Biblical definition of the term "prophet" is false to begin with, Paine vantages to adopt the Biblical, though deconstructed, definition in order to prove that even using the terms and definitions suggested by the opponent, his argument regarding the untenable and intrinsically wrong nature of the Biblical suppositions regarding the deity and divine communication with the individual.

The use of conditional clauses, however, makes this position of a merely strategic acceptance of the opposing definitions clear. Paine formulates the definition of the term "prophet" using the condition clause "[i]f by a prophet we are to suppose a man to whom the Almighty communicated some event that would take place in the future" and thereby

clarifies that he does not explicitly negate the potential existence of individuals to whom this particular definitions could apply. However he also makes clear that the acceptance of such a definition cannot be accepted in an unconditional fashion, and that certain criteria, which the structure of the conditional clause implies to be presented to the reader in the coming segment of the sentence, must be met. In this expectation, however, the reader is not entirely satisfied, as the said second segment of the sentence reads "either there were such men or there were not" and thus does not establish a direct conditional relation with the preceding clause's content. Instead of presenting the reader with a particular condition that must be fulfilled in order for "us" to "suppose" that the term "prophet" designates an individual engaged in a very particular kind of exchange of information with the deity, Paine simply states a rather obvious proposition, namely that the existence of such individuals might have been factually true just as readily as it might not have been factually true. Again, Paine states his seeming lack of bias toward any of these two possibilities: This main clause's syntactic construction employing the connectives "either" and "or" implies equivalence between the two options. This apparent syntactical discontinuity can be read as a suggestion that the consequence of the readers' agreement with the Biblical definition of the term "prophet" is an acknowledgement that this definition, or this signifier tied unto a very specific signified, might not have a referent in the material world, just as readily as it might have a referent – both possibilities are equally likely.

From this point Paine proceeds with a further investigation of one of the options: He states his thoughts concerning the option of the potential existence of "prophets" according to the Biblical definition. Again, he employs the conditional to indicate his logical, scientific distance and lack of bias, enhancing a characteristic tone of speculation in his expression. He refrains from the use of the *irrealis* and maintains the conversational quality of a purely logical pursuit, devoid of belligerent intentions. But subsequently, the length and structure of the main clause and its object argument clause point to the polemic and heated passion that Paine had proved throughout his tract. In this manner, the calmness of the previous sentences and the composed backdrop that is thus created only add to the passion of his subsequent refutation of the existence of "prophets" according to the Bible. Three times Paine paraphrases the consequence that he sees stemming from the potential past existence of "prophets" in the Biblical sense. This consequence he posits as the clarity of the "prophets'" expression when mediating the information they received from the deity to

other individuals or when manifesting that information in written form. For emphasis, he expresses this thought using both statements and their negations when he posits that "prophets" would mediate between the godhead and the human being "in terms that could be understood," contrasting it with the way of expression he identifies to be employed in the Bible, namely "such a loose and obscure manner as to be out of the comprehension of those that heard it," describing the negative further as "so equivocal as to fit almost any circumstance that may happen afterward" (Paine, *The Age* 717, 718).

Paine starts this series of paraphrases by the impersonal formulation of "it is consistent to believe," thereby dissociating his argument from his own person, trying to imbue it with authority through an appeal to logic and common sense, which in this instance and on account of the mentioned syntactical discontinuity is rather a conscious claim to logical thoroughness and consistency than a truly convincing demonstration thereof. Again, this impersonal formula and its forceful appeal to authority renders patent the very passion and belligerence which Paine seemed to be eager to downplay at the beginning of the paragraph in question.

This statement introduces the object argument sentence "that the event so communicated would be told in terms that could be understood" (ibid.). This argument sentence contains a fundamental ambiguity on account of a lack of clarity regarding the author of the action of telling referred to. It is clear that "the event so communicated" refers to the content of the information passed on from the deity to the "prophet" and is expressive of the first degree of immediacy between individual and authority. Subsequently, however, two manners of reading appear to be possible when it comes to interpreting who engages in the activity referred to when the mediation of the said content is further described with the segment "would be told in terms that could be understood." One way of reading would refer this part to the deity, meaning that the deity would transmit the information in a precise and unequivocal manner to the prophetic individual. The other way of reading would lead to an interpretation in which the said segment refers to the secondary transmission of the information from the "prophet" to other individuals. The same ambiguity applies to the subsequent clauses, in which the author characterizes the mode of information transmission involving the "prophet." Describing the opposite of the desirable kind of transmission, Paine writes that the information would not be "related in such a loose and obscure manner as to be out of the comprehension of those that heard it" (ibid.).

Paine's subsequent statement regarding the particular perception of the godhead that he sees as transpiring in the assumption that Biblical "prophets" existed is also affected by the said ambiguity. The ambiguity relates specifically to the precise character of the "jesting manner with mankind" that Paine ascribes to a deity whose messages to human beings generally actually correspond with those messages manifested in the Bible. The first option of reading implies that the primary message uttered directly by the deity exhibits the characteristics of a lack of clarity and transparency and therefore a comparable lack of good will towards the human beings receiving it. In this case, Paine seems to imply that the Bible constructs a deity qua highest authority and power that is not interested in communicating in a clear, comprehensible, and unmistakable manner with the human being. Such a construction would render the godhead itself as opaque. The "prophets," on the other hand, could claim the feature of transparence for themselves on account of having transmitted the message veritably and without distortion.

Following the second option of reading the passage, one may also arrive at the conclusion that the mediation as a process distorted a once clear and comprehensible message, and that therefore the "prophets" in their intervening function proved to be opaque. In that case, the godhead is implied to direct a clear and understandable message to human beings, yet this message gets deformed as it passes though the interface, in this case the "prophet," who is then left to misreport the divine missive. While the godhead adheres to the principle of transparence in this interpretation, it still seems to choose not to engage in direct, unobstructed forms of communication with human beings, preferring to do so through the distorting opacity of an intervening element. Both of these options of reading the passage in question therefore substantiate Paine's reproof of "conceiving very irreverently of the Almighty" directed at the Bible, as both options point to the godhead's "jesting manner" of denying the majority of individuals clear, direct, and transparent communication. This reproof concerning the representation of the godhead as communicating in an "obscure manner" discloses Paine's concern with principles of accountability and with methods of safeguarding justice. Both Paine and the Bible operate on the assumption that the deity has rather specific provisions for human kind and thus communicates certain laws or principles that human beings are admonished to heed and to incorporate into their lives. The Bible, of which Paine is aware but which he does not seem

to support, also postulates that there are specific punishments for a failure to comply with said laws or principles.

Basing his argumentation on the very shortcomings of language with regard to its specificity to historical contexts, Paine proposes a very different definition of the appellation of "prophet," basing his claim on his own research. Paine thus claims that

> the original meaning of the words prophet and prophesying has been changed, and that a prophet, in the sense the word is now used, is a creature of modern invention; and it is owing to this change in the meaning of the words, that the flights and metaphors of the Jewish poets, and phrases and expressions now rendered obscure by our not being acquainted with the local circumstances to which they applied at the time they were used, have been erected into prophesies, and made to bend to explanations at the will and whimsical conceits of sectaries, expounders, and commentators. (Paine, *The Age* 717)

As Paine establishes the prophets to denominate poets, he clearly denies them the authority to render statements that pertain to ascertainable, material facts. Defining the name sakes of the Biblical chapters as poets locates the texts attributed to them in the realm of fiction. Rather than reliable reports meant to inform readers or to reliably relay information, their primary function is now defined as providing literary texts with no binding or even affected relation to material reality. Rather than denying the accountability of the prophets, Paine thus implies that they were never to be held accountable in the first place, as their concern was the creation of, as it were, art, and not that of reliable and verifiable reports. Interestingly, Emerson too is known to equate "prophets" and "poets" for similar purposes, most prominently in his "Divinity School Address." As Buell points out, Emerson employs "the analogy of poetry pejoratively, to diminish the authority of historical Christianity" in order to finally urge that "scripture [be] read as literature, solely to inspire, while at the same time he wants better Bibles written by inspired contemporaries" (*Literary Transcendentalism* 31).

Historians receive a similar assessment by Paine, inasmuch as he does not accept the alleged verisimilitude of the accounts. Since a visual connection cannot be established with the past, credible and plausible as well as verifiable accounts of the past stand in to replace

the visual connection in the face of its impossibility. Paine conceives of these alleged historic accounts as inserting themselves between the present-day individual and the events represented in the texts concerned. If their accuracy in the description of the referenced events can be conceived of as the texts' transparency, Paine assumes that they distort, and thus obfuscate, the events in question, introducing a layer of opaque quality between the present readers and past events. This mechanism of obfuscating past events is of importance in Paine's manner of theorizing power, as he identifies these very past events to serve as legitimizing moments for political power wielded in the present. The past is thus a source of political power, which, however, cannot be investigated into on account of the obfuscation pretended by the Biblical texts. All of these texts, according to Paine, lack verifiability and therefore transparency.

This conception of the past and its relevant events can be read as the result of a projection of the principle of rhizomatic panopticism from the dimension of space onto that of time. The conflation of spatiality and temporality also informs much of Emerson's dealing with history, as his introductory remarks to *Nature* allow assuming. Nature's sixth chapter entitled "Idealism" contains an elaboration on the character of religious history that can be read as both, a remarkably precise continuation of and answer to Paine's stated concerns on the same issue, and as a further illustration of the projection of a spatial structure onto a temporal one with the resulting conflation of the two:

> Idealism sees the world in God. It beholds the whole circle of persons and things, of actions and events, of country and religion, not as painfully accumulated, atom after atom, act after act, in an aged creeping Past, but as one vast picture, which God paints on the instant eternity, for the contemplation of the soul. Therefore the soul holds itself off from a too trivial and microscopic study of the universal tablet. It respects the end too much, to immerse itself in the means. It sees something more important in Christianity, than the scandals of ecclesiastical history, or the niceties of criticism; and, very incurious concerning persons or miracles, and not at all disturbed by chasms of historical evidence, it accepts from God the phenomenon, as it finds it, as the pure and awful form of religion in the world. (Emerson 39)

This passage presents the philosophical worldview of Idealism as the instrument that helps explicating the said projection of a spatial structure of rhizomatic panopticism onto the temporal structure of a linear progression of elements, thereby transforming the latter. This process renders "an aged and creeping Past" defined by the temporal succession of events, or "atom after atom, act after act" on "one vast picture."

Emerson suggests that Idealism allows for an extraction of "the whole circle of persons and things, of actions and events, of country and religion," in other words of material phenomena constituting history, from their material manifestations and the inscription or transposition of the immaterialized essences of the said phenomena into the sphere of "instant eternity." While "God" is referred to as the agent who carries out this immaterializing transposition of history into the said sphere, he himself is also presented as such a sphere: The first sentence of the quoted passage endows the deity with the spatial preposition "in," thus prompting an understanding of the deity as itself an immaterial space into which the events are transcribed. This intimation of God's spatiality renders him synonymous with the term of "instant eternity," defining both as an immaterial location that harbors the essential, immaterial counterparts of all material phenomena and events. Another important characteristic of that sphere is its permission of a simultaneous and lasting rather than a sequential and fleeting contact with the said immaterialized objects and events. The described inscription or transposition transmutes a sequence of events into, as Emerson puts it, "one vast picture" or a "universal tablet."

In spite of the immaterial character of the objects within sphere, the said simultaneous and lasting contact now possible with the objects contained within it is represented in terms of visual perception. Not only is the modified noun of the "vast picture" directly related to that semantic field of vision, as a "picture" is widely understood to be an object whose sole purpose is to be visually perceived. The expression of the purpose of visual perception is not, however, merely implicit in the noun itself; it is also clearly and directly states in the phrase "for the contemplation of the soul." The deity's activity of transposition, rendered with the singular third person present verb form of "paints" and thereby again activating the semantic field of visual perception, has a clear end, and that end is to provide the human being with direct, simultaneous, and quasi visual-access to the multitude of elements otherwise located in a linear temporal progression. Such a transposition and subsequent "contemplation" aids, as Emerson explains, the

understanding of larger connections between and contexts of the said transposed and immaterialized objects and events as it prevents the "too trivial and microscopic study" of these phenomena. Again, Emerson references the semantic field of vision, this time to differentiate between the desired and the objectionable modes of visual engagement. Clearly, the perception of greater contexts within the simultaneous rendition of objects and events receives greater valorization than the analysis of particular events, which Emerson disparages as "microscopic."

In its qualities, "instant eternity" as a sphere can be conceptualized as a Deleuzian plane of immanence. Historic events, essentially transcendent in their location outside of immediate human experience and ideologically charged as normative constructions of *telos* for the legitimization of current power relations (cf. Melville 144) are transposed into a sphere linked to the individual's "soul." As Christian Kerslake describes it, the Deleuzian plane of immanence relates and captures everything and beyond it or outside of it, there can be no goal or telos: "In this *intensive spatium*, everything is connected, present situations repeat ancient problems with a new turn of the screw, anxieties and desires are repeated through the ages […]" (91).

It is the mentioned deliberate neglect of details that allows Emerson to assume a rather more dispassionate position toward the religion of Christianity than is to be seen in Paine's case. Emerson enumerates inconsistencies that concern Christianity's credibility and thereby betrays the same awareness of their potentially problematic character when it comes to defending Christianity's social and political role throughout history as does Paine. Just as Paine, Emerson references "the scandals of ecclesiastical history" as well as the "chasms of historical evidence" (Emerson 39), but refrains from a detailed discussion of these discrediting features of the Christian church. Instead, Emerson proposes to view Christianity in the manner it would be rendered in the sphere of the "instant eternity" after its transposition, namely in an abstracted shape allowing for greater focus on its wider implications into history, or "as the pure and awful form of religion in the world." This is one instance in which Emerson's rejection of the "microscopic study" of phenomena comes into effect. Instead of investigating the material motivations and corruptions of the Christian church in Paine's manner, Emerson proposes its evaluation as a structural presence that must be acknowledged in the manner in which it presents itself. In this way, Emerson's suggested method of dealing with the organized religion of Christianity presents itself as less

oriented towards transformation than that of Paine. Nonetheless, there are more potential readings of this passage than those detecting malicious allegiance with the status quo and an unwillingness to attack power structures built on deception.

Coming back to the concept of the sphere into which historical events and material objects find themselves transposed for the purpose of their better "contemplation" by the individual human being, one cannot but feel reminded of the digital sphere described by Haggerty and Ericson, into which "distinct data doubles" (Ericson and Haggerty 606) are introduced for the purpose of a better examination by analysts affiliated with diverse government actors and other parties in the possession of a large enough technological apparatus to carry out the collection of data needed. The structural homologies between the two virtual spheres as described by Emerson on the one hand and by the sociologists on the other can thus be described as striking. Both, Emerson's Idealist "instant eternity" and Ericson and Haggerty's virtual space operate on the basis of abstraction, immaterialization, and deterritorialization; both spheres present themselves as endowed with what can be described as a storing capacity for the deterritorialized, immaterial counterparts of material phenomena; both spheres function as storing places in order to provide the onlooker with vantage points and opportunities to process the information stored that would not be achievable in the realm of the material. In the case of the "discreet data doubles" described by the sociologists, the storage of the information provides for a detailed analysis necessary for the purposes of close surveillance; in the case of Emerson's "pure and awful form[s]," the transposition into the immaterial sphere allows for the recognition of wider contexts and interdependences as well as for the structural acknowledgement of phenomena.

This divergence of purposes, detail-oriented in the first case, context-oriented in the other, may be conditioned by the second significant divergence of the two spheres of deterritorialized, immaterialized phenomena, which is constituted by the intended provision of access to that sphere. More precisely, the extent to which such access would be provided to individuals impacts the purpose and final use of the information stored in the described fashion. In the case of the computerized storage of information about citizens and the creation of their "data doubles," access to these doubles is intended to be extremely limited. As Ericson and Haggerty describe it, the creation of such "data doubles" as well as their analysis is carried out by states or organizations close to governments, or by large corporations, for the sake of rendering surveillance more effective and to exploit the

information gathered and retained for economic purposes. As these actors as well as their respective purposes necessitate a micro-targeting of individuals, the focus of the onlooker or analyst is guided toward the detail. The case presents itself very differently with Emerson, whose abstract sphere of "instant eternity" seems to have been created by the divine force in order to be accessed by every "soul."

Likewise, the homologies between Emerson's "instant eternity" and the digital sphere described by Ericson and Haggerty thus once again exemplify how a manifestation of the concepts suggested by rhizomatic panopticism can be actualized, first in conceptual and later in material terms. Discussing the role of the "multiplicity" of the sovereign in democracy, James L. Hyland remarks that

> Michel Foucault has famously and persuasively argued that power as positive control is co-extensive with the capacity for surveillance. The management and organization of a populous and vastly complex society involves the gathering, marshalling, appraisal, processing, storage and use of a huge quantity of detailed information. It is inconceivable that a single individual could have this capacity. (248)

For Emerson, it is conceivable indeed. Hyland, of course, refers to the material plane of the actual execution of such a project of data administration for the purposes of organizing a well functioning society; he also uses this argument differently, namely to show that the effective concentration of power in one individual alone is an abstraction rather than a practicable blueprint, wherefore "the time-honoured classification of constitutions in terms of number" is to be questioned (ibid.).

To reiterate the main conclusions of this chapter's analysis, Paine and Emerson appear at odds when it comes to the evaluation of representative processes. Paine describes linguistic representation, the representation by Biblical figures in theological terms, as well as the representation of historical events in terms of an interference and reduction of transparence in a direct relationship with the divine power for exploitative ends. Emerson, in sharp contrast to this critical view, regards all of the mentioned representative systems as at least partly beneficial to address some challenges posed to such direct relationships by the problem of scale. In that manner, Emerson seems to side with those proponents of representative political mechanisms in democracy who evaluate the increasing size of

modern constituencies as not permissive of a different solution, while Paine appears to continue to adhere to the ideal of direct democracy, condemning representative mechanisms as motivated by ulterior motives and instituted by those interested in the preservation of the status quo.

8. Normative Society

One important aspect regarding both Paine's and Emerson's construction of the natural sphere as an ideal that harbors principles upon which a society and polity for human beings can be constructed is its stark departure from the Calvinist conceptions of nature as a state of being, rather than a sphere, that needs to be overcome by the individual. As Leo Marx notes in "The Idea of Nature in America," this Calvinist notion of "satanic nature" was employed in colonizing pursuits and further postulated that "only those rescued from the state of nature may enjoy the God-given liberty to do what is good, just, and honest" (10). Only "the unitary character of Newtonian science and Deism," as Marx goes on to explain, fostered a discourse which could be used to "extend the hypothetical reach of nature's laws – or, to be more precise, of principles analogous to them – to the unruly sphere of politics," which Marx recognizes Jefferson to have utilized (ibid. 11). This section offers a reading of the more concrete sociopolitical materializations of the principles of rhizomatic panopticism that Paine and Emerson project onto nature. Reviewing some of the principles according to which Paine and Emerson construct the natural spheres in their respective tracts, this chapter examines further features of the normative social outline to be deduced from *The Age of Reason* and *Nature*. In contradistinction to the preceding chapters that explicated normative provisions for democratic political processes, this one focuses on the normative social structures intended to harbor those political processes. I put forward that the main prescriptive features Paine and Emerson construct as material equivalents of the theoretical notion of the rhizomatically panoptic gaze are multiplicity and movement, which I examine in the first two sections of this chapter. In the third section, I analyze which implications these particular materializations of the rhizomatically panoptic gaze have for the construction of social mobility in both texts.

Multiplicity

When Paine speaks of society, he does so most prominently in reference to astronomical observations. One must remember that Paine conceptualizes the sphere of the social in chiefly Deist terms, which means that he postulates that the ideal society, one that follows the prescriptive model of rhizomatic panopticism, is formed as a result of the emulation of those parameters exhibited by the godhead in the natural sphere. One of these parameters Paine identifies to be multiplicity. As the argumentative frame of *The Age of Reason* mandates, he does so by constructing his analysis on the basis of an oppositional stance to church doctrine, which is not permissive of the idea of multiplicity in astronomical terms. Writing in this oppositional stance to Christian convictions concerning the singularity of the creation as witnessed on earth, Paine suggests that there are in fact many such creations, some of them partly visible when engaging in astronomical observation. Paine writes that thus "[t]he solitary idea of a solitary world rolling, or at rest, in the immense ocean of space, gives place to the cheerful idea of a society of worlds, so happily contrived, as to administer, even by their motion, instruction to man" (*The Age* 710). Here, it is the noticeable opposition of the adjectives "solitary" and "cheerful" that construct multiplicity as the better, factually correct, and therefore the prescriptive structure exhibited by the universe. The adjective marked as the attribute of the less desirable structural conception is striking through its repetition and invocation of loneliness. Its opposite, on the other hand, namely a multiplicity of potentially inhabited planets, has as an attribute the positively marked adjective "cheerful," later bolstered by the positively charged adverb "happily" to denominate the mode and effect of this multiplicity's engineering, and appears vested in the specifically socially coded noun "society" rather than in a more abstract signifier pointing to strictly quantitative features, such as the previously employed noun "plurality" (ibid. 709). In this manner, Paine reinforces the Deist notion that laws and structural features observable in nature should also inform social outlines. In this particular case the structural feature transferred from nature to society is multiplicity.

In these quoted lines Paine ascribes instructive force to the motion of the elements that constitute the multiplicity, a notion to which I return in the next section. It is, however, also the structure marked by multiplicity itself that has a didactic purpose according to Paine. He renders this postulation even clearer in the following passage:

> As therefore the Creator made nothing in vain, so also must it be believed that he organized the structure of the universe in the most advantageous manner for the benefit of man; and as we see, and from experience feel, the benefits we derive from the structure of the universe, formed as it is, which benefits we should not have had the opportunity of enjoying, if the structure, so far as relates to our system, had been a solitary globe, we can discover, at least, one reason why a *plurality* of worlds has been made, and that reason calls forth the devotional gratitude of man, as well as his admiration. (*The Age* 709; emphasis in the original)

To put Paine's message as it transpires in this quote at its simplest, one can state that he identifies "plurality," specifically a "plurality of worlds," as the chief "benefit" intended by the godhead to be enjoyed by human kind. Here, Paine elevates the organizational principle of multiplicity to the primary condition for human thriving in the natural world. In the previous paragraph, Paine dissertates on the circumstance that the universe's structural feature of multiplicity, or most precisely of the visibility of several astronomical bodies, preconditions the human being's deduction of natural laws and therefore the formation of the sciences. The formation of the sciences as a result of the codification of the observation and analysis of the regularities that calibrate themselves between the elements of the multiplicity of the universe, or in other words between the visible astronomical bodies, seems to constitute Paine's main reason for referring to that multiplicity as advantageous for human kind. Without the visible presence of other planets, Paine argues, the human being would not have been able to aptly deduce and arrive at a useful formulation of natural laws and regularities. This formulation and advance of the sciences, however, is the precondition for the advance for the material culture of human beings. The "benefit" thus conditioned by a structure marked by what Paine identifies as "plurality" is the scientific and the concomitant material advance derived from it.

This elevation of science to the status of a chief "benefit" for whose achievement an entire universe had to be induced to fulfill certain structural characteristics also betrays Paine's immense investment into and paramount shaping by Enlightenment discourses. As Larkin notes regarding Paine's previous publications that centered on scientific topics, "[i]nstead of celebrating the beauty of nature of the marvels of its internal logic, nature is valuable because of its practical benefit to humans" (120). As Larkin explains further, for

Paine “Enlightenment science ultimately seeks to understand nature in order to exploit it” (ibid.). As the reading of the passages quoted above suggests, this exploitation is not limited to the ambit of scientific and material progress eventually benefitting the human being, but expands to the gain of sociopolitical improvement, as well.

Calling to mind the Deist tenet that the structures and principles found in the natural sphere must be emulated by human kind on account of their intended beneficence to the human being, one can plausibly assume that the human-made structures of society are also implied to, ideally, follow structures and phenomena found in nature. Multiplicity is one such structural feature that would have to be transferred to the social sphere in the course of the suggested analogous construction. Multiplicity thus operates as a didactic tool furthering human beings’ understanding regarding objectively verifiable and factually correct natural laws that can be used in order to arrive at conclusions about the material world advantageous to the human being. In other words, the presence of multiplicity finally allows for a harnessing of those laws in order to manipulate the material sphere. Following the principle of analogy, an ideal, normative society according to Paine would entail structural characteristics fashioned after those of nature and would therefore incorporate the feature of multiplicity in a very prominent manner. The visibility and felt presence of heterogeneous groups of different demographic cohorts, political convictions, identifications, alliances, among other factors, would thus constitute a prescriptive feature of such an idealized, normative society. The reason for such an elevation of multiplicity or “plurality” and, by implication, heterogeneity would be these characteristics’ assumed propensity for the induction of processes of understanding regarding the principles that govern society in general. Only by virtue of the observation of the relative positioning, movements, and interactions of the elements of society that constitute its multiplicity or “plurality” could one arrive at a codification of structures and principles that could be harnessed to further the human beings’ or citizens’ “benefit.”

Interesting about such an analogy between the multiplicity of the natural sphere and the multiplicity of the social sphere is its implication of the existence of objective and verifiable principles shaping and determining the interactions of, for example, different groups of political interest or different demographics. And only through the observation and identification of such principles can these be, finally, codified into laws. It is necessary to keep in mind, particularly in this context, that the signifier of “law” can have different

connotations depending on whether it is used within the context of a semantic field pertaining to science or one pertaining to society. In the first case, the noun "law" connotes a rather more descriptive approach, implying that the phenomenon or principle codified as a "natural law" has been observed to happen with such reliable frequency as to have a quasi predictive capacity. In the second case, however, the signifier of "law" connotes a more prescriptive approach, as it implies the prescription and superimposition of norms onto individuals and groups that might not be voluntarily followed by them without the coercive presence of these very norms. As one dictionary distinguishes, "*Law* in its ideal is the statement of a *principle* of right in mandatory form, by competent authority, with adequate penalty for disobedience" while "a natural *law* is simply a recognized system of sequences or relations; as Kepler's *laws* of planetary distances" ("Law"; emphases in the original). In the face of this distinction of what "law" can imply, it is particularly interesting to read the quoted passage and apply it by way of analogy to the sphere of the social. Paine seems to imply that, in fact, the "laws" formulated in that realm should be codified observations, as well, reflecting already existing and functioning phenomena and processes, or "sequences" and "relations" to echo the dictionary's definitions. Instead of constituting a set of norms meant to be imposed and enforced from above, "law" should be, as Paine's suggestion seems to put forward, a descriptive rather than a prescriptive signifier. From this implication one can once again infer that for Paine, politics is also political science: The formulation of rules and laws delineating and regulating relationships of power must always entail a thorough observation of conditions as they establish themselves without prescriptive forces instituted by human beings, as for Paine such a "science of politics would necessarily imply that humans can comprehend and alter government in order to improve it or to solve problems" (Larkin 135).

To return to the structural features of multiplicity and heterogeneity, it is opportune to once more regard Paine's elaborations on the character of extraterrestrial life analyzed previously (cf. Paine, *The Age* 709). Paine designs a scenario in which "[t]he inhabitants of each of the worlds, of which our system is composed" (ibid.) profit from the specific structure of the universe and the visibility of its multifarious elements in the very same manner that human beings on planet earth do. Especially the "revolutionary motions" (ibid.) performed by those elements received attention, as Paine's formulation seems to suggest that "[r]revolution in Europe […] will not only lead to the replacement of monarchies with

democracies, but will also involve the creation of a mutually beneficial alliance between the various new democratic nations" (Larkin 130). What can be read as applying to the relations between nations and their societies can, however, also be projected onto the structures and relations within a particular society.

Paine's elaboration on extraterrestrial life not only conveys the socio-political interdependence between the principles of multiplicity and reciprocity by way of analogy, it also emphasizes multiplicity in an especially compelling way if read in a verbatim manner. After all, Paine adduces the existence of other life forms than those known on planet earth not as a speculative or potential scenario, but as a certain fact. Neither lexically nor grammatically does Paine indicate the tentative character of his statement regarding the "inhabitants" of other "worlds," but rather states their existence, and an existence analogous to that of human kind, as a matter of fact, for which he does not even deem the demonstration of a logical argument or deduction necessary. Questioning the assumption of the uniqueness and centrality of human life is a powerful strategy to communicate his conviction regarding the universality of the principle of multiplicity. It is likewise an argumentative strategy employed by Paine to express his attachment to the principle of multiplicity, while also upsetting church doctrine regarding the special and exceptional position of the human being relative to the godhead. Instead of limiting his elaboration to the human beings on planet earth, thus potentially running the risk of discursively reproducing attitudes privileging the centrality of human beings and their exclusive access to the realm of the divine, Paine postulates that earth and its life forms constitute but one of many such nodes in the structure of "plurality," whose other nodes or "worlds" are all equally equipped to establish a direct relationship with the divine, rendered in a visual form.

Paine uses this strategy of postulating the existence of extraterrestrial life repeatedly in the course of his tract and explicitly employs it in order to criticize church doctrine. The main feature that he seeks to thus unmask is Christianity's, as Paine suggests, unreasonable insistence on the singular character of human existence, which is mediated in the doctrine of redemption:

> From whence then could arise the solitary and strange conceit that the Almighty, who had millions of worlds equally dependent on his protection, should quit the care of all the rest, and come to die in our world, because, they say, one man and one

> woman had eaten an apple. And, on the other hand, are we to suppose that every world, in the boundless creation, had an Eve, and apple, a serpent, and a redeemer. In this case, the person who is irreverently called the Son of God, and sometimes God himself, would have nothing else to do than to travel from world to world, in an endless succession of death, with scarcely a momentary interval of life. (Paine, *The Age* 710)

An aspect of importance in this passage focuses, again, on the concept of multiplicity. In this instance, Paine proceeds by way of a thought experiment, appealing to common sense on the basis of the premises which Paine has previously established using astronomical observation. Paine again sets out to dismantle the notion of uniqueness, with which the Christian religion vests the human world, by referring to the "millions of worlds" present in the universe, stating that they are "equally dependent on his protection." The numeral "millions" is a very direct referent to the notion of multiplicity governing, in Paine's sense, the natural and first and foremost the astronomical phenomena of the universe. At the same time, he establishes a contrast to the qualified numeral "only one" that describes the same noun of "world" in the previous paragraph and summarizes Christian belief. This contradiction also extends to the adjectives "solitary and strange," which are phonetically connected by means of alliteration and likewise denominate the claim to uniqueness so prominent in the Christian world view. He further emphasizes the falseness of the claim to uniqueness by stating that those "millions of worlds" depend on God "equally," an adverb that stresses the state of the human existence as in no way exclusive or unique. Here, Paine further unfolds this rhetorical question by weakening the idea that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, presented as the proof of the uniqueness of the human relation to God according to the doctrine of atonement, is a sensible proposition regarding the multiplicity of worlds and peoples in which a scenario of this kind would be possible. Neither the notion that this sacrifice would be a unique occurrence to save the human beings on earth nor the theoretical possibility that Jesus as the son and consubstantial likeness of God would have been sacrificed in every of the observable worlds strikes Paine as worthy of belief. He speculates in a somewhat derisive fashion on the possibility of the iterative occurrence of all the elements told in the Biblical account of the fall of man, wound together in the same narrative structure, in the multiplicity of worlds observable.

Paine's alternative descriptions of the Biblical account in this instance are not merely an example of his often noted and criticized irreverent tone when it comes to dealing with matters of religion. It may be passages like these that lead Prochaska to remark that "[l]acking the rapier of wit of his French contemporaries, Paine bludgeoned his adversaries with the English sledgehammer of common sense" (562). Paine also makes clear that he cannot accept narratives that are so particular as to be ostentatiously inapplicable to a structure that operates on the principle of multiplicity, and, by extension, on that of heterogeneity. Rather than being a "law" in the descriptive sense, the Bible is represented as a prescriptive instance whose authority bases itself on an arbitrary postulation of uniqueness and singularity that fails to assert itself in the face of thorough scrutiny. Cleary, for Paine the Bible does not represent in any way the regularities deducible from natural observation on the basis of which an objective political science applicable to all democratic societies can be formulated. The Bible also appears here as a capricious account made to disrespecting human logical capacities and faculties of observation and inductive thinking.

To return to the quoted passage, Paine derives further momentum for his criticism of the Bible's claim to singularity, and therefore its denounced disregard for observable natural structures, from his depiction of the role of the human body in the Biblical account. Maintaining the stylistic unity of his exposition in this passage, he again offers these calculations in the form of rhetorical questions. The use of the interrogative pronoun "whence" in this paragraph's first rhetorical question is of particular interest, as it unites the causal sense of the question itself with a spatial notion inherent in the pronoun. The expression of this connection between causal relations and spatial thinking can be interpreted as indicative of Paine's thought. As indicated, Paine ascribes a central position to material reality in its spatial arrangement when it comes to arriving at figures of thought and metaphors or abstractions. In this context, it seems fitting to ask for a spatial source, a particular location to have given origin to the "idea" or the "conceit" that is central to Christianity. While the Christian and Biblical sources do not seem to address these questions of the material basis for thought abstractions in Paine's view, he himself hints at the material origin of or implications for Christian "idea[s]" and "conceit[s]," namely the human body in its isolated form, not connected to the broader context of nature into which it is always implicated. Paine seems to suggest, in other words, that Christianity's intellectual tradition, as well as all of the abstract notions it offers, are derived from an isolated contemplation of

the human body, setting it as the absolute measure against all of nature, which is ascribed a much lower position within Christian hierarchy. Here, the reader is reminded of Paine's qualification of Christianity as "manism" (*The Age* 690) in its likely seeming man-made origin. This theme of the isolated human body set as the absolute is taken up again in the present paragraph. By referring to Jesus Christ as "the person who is irreverently called the Son of God, and sometimes God himself" (ibid. 710) Paine highlights his conviction that Christianity operates on the equation of the deity and the human being and insists that one of the parts of the Trinity is in fact not the deity, but merely a "person" who is fashioned by other humans to take the place of the deity.

This setting of the human body in the shape of Jesus Christ as absolute, isolated, and in fact as God is fundamentally opposed to the notion of multiplicity. Multiplicity, as Paine alludes in this passage, is permissive or contrasts and comparisons, as the elements constituting the multiplicity stand in constant relations to each other. Hence Paine can refer to the "millions of worlds" and state that they are "equally dependent" upon the deity, establishing comparisons and affirming the existence of relations between all of the elements, the worlds in this case. The deity functions as the main relation between the worlds in this instance. The fact that it is the human body that plays such a central role in Christianity is further underlined by Paine when he poignantly summarizes the instance of original sin and fall of man with the reductio of "because, they say, one man and one woman had eaten an apple" (*The Age* 710). The repetition of the numeral "one" again calls to mind uniqueness and singularity as the major Christian principles of order, while the nouns of "man" and "woman," which are qualified by the numerals, establish a dichotomy that is materially established in terms of anatomy only, a fact which restates the material centrality of the absolute human body to Christianity in Paine's terms.

Furthermore, the brusque description of Adam and Eve's transgression as an act of ingestion directs the reader's attention even stronger to the necessities related to maintaining the human body through eating. By divesting the narrative of Adam and Eve's presence in and exit out of paradise of its verbal and authoritative splendor, attributed to it in the Biblical account, Paine manages to expose the underlying focus on processes directly related to human physiology. This reductio therefore achieves one further degree of distinction between the multiplicity of the natural world, which informs the tenets of Paine's Deism, and the sole focus upon the human body engendering the concept of uniqueness,

which shapes Christian doctrines. The enumeration of the elements that played a role in the said narrative of the fall of man, namely "an Eve, and apple, a serpent, and a redeemer" (Paine, *The Age* 710) invoke a notion of the finite and humanly graspable; all of these elements are within the human bodily range as well as within the range of human every-day experience. In short, all of the elements seem tailored towards the human body and perception in size and scope, which again points to the circumstance of Christianity's design to juxtapose the human being and the deity in a relation of potential semblance or sameness.

This notion is, however, introduced by the reference to an astronomical observation, namely "the boundless creation." While this reference is by no means an accurate, scientific description of astronomically observable fact, its somewhat exaggerated and hyperbolic wording evokes an image of the deity that proposes the concept of multiplicity as a working principle. The adjective "boundless" alludes to the scale of space that is beyond the scale of both, the human body and the human imagination, which decouples the idea of the deity from the idea and physical shape of the human being. Paine's use of the adjective "boundless" seems to invoke scales that defy human dimensions. The fact that the term "boundless creation" appears in an apposition in the course of the paragraph's second rhetorical question and functions as a hyperonymic paraphrase for the previous term of "every world" further emphasizes Paine's insistence on the importance of the concept of multiplicity through the redundancy of the paraphrases used.

Apart from the conspicuous concentration of the Biblical account on the human body, the Bible's representation of God as concerned with a particular version of atonement is used by Paine to discredit claims to uniqueness and singularity. The characterization of God as busying himself with repeatedly enacting the sacrifice of the crucifixion, which would follow from the premise that each of the observable worlds had the same theological history as the earth according to Christianity, is also presented in the fashion of a reductio. This enhances its poignant and somewhat comic effect. Particularly the conditional phrase characterizing God as "would have nothing else to do than to travel from world to world, in an endless succession of death, with scarcely a momentary interval of life" (Paine, *The Age* 710), has implications not only for this theoretical scenario of the applicability of the doctrine of atonement for multiple worlds; it also implicitly criticizes the doctrine of atonement as it exists in actual Christian theology. By emphasizing the demise of the figure

of the Savior with the phrasing of "an endless succession of death," Paine seems to allude that this religious construct's focus is primarily death and the very human preoccupation therewith. In this case, Paine is in line with number of critics of Christianity as well as with scholars of religions in general who postulate or detect a correlation between religiosity and the human fear of and, partly, fascination with death (e. g. Epley and Hoelter, Lazar, Ellis and Wahab). Again, the deity finds itself reduced to the very human experiencing death over and over again, and thereby metonymically to the one element of human life that, arguably, induces most fear and preoccupation, namely to death. In this instance, then, Paine is once again unmasking elements of "manism" (*The Age* 690) in the form of human fears and problems in Christianity.

Paine's attention to the structural feature of multiplicity does not dull his perception of the importance of hierarchies within any given multiplicity. He devotes some space to the description of the solar system, enumerating its planets in their order from the Sun and adducing the respective distances that the planets, or "worlds" as Paine refers to them, from the Sun. The enumeration of distances and revolution times for every of the planets of the solar system renders Paine's interest in the relations between the objects of any given system apparent (cf. 707). The fact that all of the planets enumerated are respectively designated the hyperonymic noun "world" to define them once again points to Paine's insistence on an understanding of systems that foregrounds their multicentric character and de-emphasizes hierarchies. The understanding of hierarchies and of their existence is not, however, obliterated: Paine devotes a due part of his attention to the description of "fixed stars" (708), acknowledging their central position in any given solar system. Also, the fact that the Sun is the location from which he measures the distance of every planet, instead of, for example, measuring the distances between the planets, shows that his insistence on the presence of many suns as centers of planetary systems in the universe does not preclude him from recognizing hierarchical, centered structures and discussing them adequately.

It has to be acknowledged that the solar system represents an arborific structure, with clearly defined and privileged center-points, around which the system's spatial organization takes place. However, Paine renders more space and elucidation to the motion and nature of the "worlds." After describing the central position of the "fixed stars," Paine goes on to state that "[b]y this easy progression of ideas, the immensity of space will appear to us to be filled with systems of worlds; and that no part of space lies at waste, any more

than any part of our globe of earth and water is left unoccupied" (*The Age* 708). The participle phrase "filled with systems of worlds" (ibid.) once again marks multiplicity as a main principle in Paine's conception of the structure of the universe; this structure, as has been mentioned, is supposed to characterize and determine every system contained in the universe.

A reference to political participation and social heterogeneity can be assumed to underlie the positive description of multiplicity in Emerson, as well. As the following passage indicates, the said structural characteristic of multiplicity is much stronger linked to that of motion and has, in this particular linkage, a very distinct social component for the narrator:

> Nature is made to conspire with spirit to emancipate us. Certain mechanical changes, a small alteration in our local position apprizes us of a dualism. We are strangely affected by seeing the shore from a moving ship, from a balloon, or through the tints of an unusual sky. The least change in our point of view, gives the whole world a pictorial air. A man who seldom rides, needs only to get into a coach and traverse his own town, to turn the street into a puppet-show. The men, the women, – talking, running, bartering, fighting, – the earnest mechanic, the lounger, the beggar, the boys, the dogs, are unrealized at once, or, at least, wholly detached from all relation to the observer, and seen as apparent, not substantial beings. What new thoughts are suggested by seeing a face of country quite familiar, in the rapid movement of the rail-road car! (Emerson 33, 34)

As the introductory sentence to the elaboration on the role of movement in the individual's perception of society expresses, the contemplation of the principles found in the natural sphere impact the human mind in order to effectuate a process of liberation. The choice of the verb "to emancipate" endows the signified liberation with a political meaning: Although largely connected to the abolition of slavery as well as the enfranchisement of the African American segments of the population (Norton et al. 399) and therefore to be assumed to lie outside of the identification of the implied white, middleclass, and educated readership, the term "emancipation" does evoke the general process of claiming political, democratic rights. To phrase it in another way, while the verb "to emancipate" vaguely references Abolitionism as one of the reform movements that were gaining momentum at the time of *Nature's*

composition, the personal pronoun “us” resituates the verb’s connotations in the context of a privileged audience, evidencing, once again, “the speaker’s capacity to relinquish his particular identity and assume an ever more inclusively general one” (Poirier, “Is there an I for an Eye?” 133), as long as “general” remains equated with the specified implied readership. Yet by means of the low-key allusion to the situation of the enslaved through the political semantics of the said verb, the narrator creates the impression that only through the combined impact of “nature” and “spirit” can the individual, even the politically free and economically affluent one that belongs to the implied readership, be freed from a state as grave and dire as bondage. Employing this set of semantic references, the narrator exaggerates and intensifies the construction of a need for another kind of liberation of those who already enjoy freedom.

Movement is presented as the main factor of this liberation. As in the first example, it is rendered material through the railway, to which the adjective in the phrase “mechanical changes” alludes. Only through this movement, by means of a synecdoche expressed as “a small alteration in our local position,” is it that the individual can grasp a principle of importance. The “dualism” which the individual is facilitated in understanding must be referred to the opposition between social roles and himself. By virtue of movement with the aid of the transportation technologies of the age, the individual is enabled to discern the social life of his quotidian context as “a puppet-show” that lacks a profound association with its observer. This suggestion of disentanglement between the individual and his immediate urban surroundings proposes an understanding of the present social reality as “unrealized” by movement and the corresponding change of one’s subjective point of view. This correspondence between movement and the assessment of the individual’s social entanglement draws on a correlation between the logic of the unreal and fictional two-dimensional image and the logic of the social sphere, whereby the aspect of the social is once again presented as dissociated from its understanding observer; in different words “a transformation of the perceptual object into an appearance” takes place in the realm of the social (Marr 45). Claiming thus that movement endows “the world with a pictorial air,” the narrator represents movement as transformative of an individual’s evaluation of society. On account of this passage’s strong focus on the representation of different professions and class markers in the accumulating enumeration of the urban scenery observed, movement as a factor changing the perception of the observed individuals’ various involvements,

depicted through the asyndetically arranged dynamic modifying present participles in "talking, running, bartering, fighting," should be read as expressing a comment on social and class roles. A statement regarding the needed understanding of social mutability and thus, the absence of an essential and fixed meaning of social class attributions can be ascribed to this representation of movement. Hence, the individuals, when designated by their association with a certain class and defined through their involvement in the daily activities mandated thereby, are described as "not substantial beings."

Through the description of movement through a social space, the sphere from which the narrator and the subsumed implied audience are to claim the abovementioned emancipation is specified. The narrator constructs the social sphere as subduing the individuals observed, firmly situating them in fixed roles. Rather than encouraging a rhizomatic connection with the elements that are constituents of society and in contrast to the described relationship with the elements that make up the natural world, the narrator advocates a conceptual distance of the individual claiming emancipation and the society that surrounds him. In this instance, the construction of the gaze ceases to follow the rhizomatic logic of reciprocity and returns to its initial function of a one-directional gradient of power and objectification, allowing the gazing individual to perceive the observed as a spectacle from which "new thoughts," which is to say new aspects of knowledge, are to be inferred. The distinct space of the "rail-road car" becomes a panoptic center in movement, traversing a sphere that can be subjected to his inquiries without subjecting the observer in return. Joel Porte's conclusion that "*Nature* concerns the fall of humanity into perceptual division from the physical environment," adding that "[s]alvation is nothing less than perceptual reunification" (42, 43) must thus be viewed in a more differentiating manner: While perception is represented as crucial to the understanding of the said "dualism," its proposed goal is to contribute to a sense of detachment from the observed in the sphere of the social. The "perceptual reunification," with its implied intensity of seeing and understanding, applies to the awareness of the natural sphere, which is supposed to prompt various processes of becoming. The social sphere, however, seems to be intentionally de-intensified and severed from the gazing individual through perception, as its non-binding and illusory character is underlined.

Contrasting with the advocated distance of the social sphere is the proposed emotional proximity to the sphere of the natural. In what seems like a paradox, the

individual's potential to transform society rests on his ability to distance himself conceptually from the world he wants to impact, and to turn to nature in order to find examples for the needed action. As the narrator puts it,

> [w]e know more from nature than we can at will communicate. Its light flows into the mind evermore, and we forget its presence. The poet, the orator, bred in the woods, whose senses have been nourished by their fair and appeasing changes, year after year, without design and without heed, – shall not lose their lesson altogether, in the roar of cities or the broil of politics. Long hereafter, amidst agitation and terror in national councils, – in the hour of revolution, – these solemn images shall reappear in their morning luster, as fit symbols and words of the thoughts which the passing events shall awaken. At the call of a noble sentiment, again the woods wave, the pines murmur, the river rolls and shines, and the cattle low upon the mountains, as he saw and heard them in his infancy. And with these forms, the spells of persuasion, the keys of power are put into his hands. (Emerson 23)

In this passage, the narrator sketches once again the ideal individual, delineating the logic behind his actions. This ideal individual's thinking is fully informed by the principles constructed to be found in nature, as it is the "light" of nature, in its conceptual and semantic contiguity to enlightening knowledge, that determines the individual's modes of thinking, until the principles of nature become a discourse so profoundly underlying his personality that its "presence" is not felt any more – applying these principles becomes an automatic activity. Since the natural sphere in *Nature* functions according to the principles of rhizomatic panopticism, the narrator can be read to encourage the learning and remembering of these very principles by the poet. In the context of rhizomatic panopticism, the character of nature's "light" as fostering the acquisition of a particular knowledge is tied to the fact that it remains a precondition of the gaze, thus facilitating connection and reciprocating control. Pointing to the explained mechanisms of the internalization and exemplification of behaviors by the observed on account of the experience of being subjected to the gaze, the narrator goes on to say that it is "without design or heed" that the individual influenced by the contemplation of the natural world carries the "lessons," or internalized imperatives, from the constructed ideal into the concrete social sphere. In

accordance with this representation of the "poet" and "orator" as internalizing the imperatives and principles of nature through a particular interaction of gazes is the recurring indication of his childhood. The individual "bred in the woods" and "nourished" by nature's example shall, according to the narrator, act in concurrence with the principles learnt in his "infancy" upon deliberately entering the social sphere. This means that the mentioned interaction of the gazes between the individual and nature is to take place in a time culturally assigned to learning and maturation, but also a time most indicative of intellectual and emotional malleability. The maturation of the individual in the natural occurs when his subjection and susceptibility to the gaze is most evident. Thus, nature functions in the style of a parent or schoolmaster, from whom the individual in his state of childhood and immaturity learns a "lesson" regarding the dealing with the social sphere.

The example of nature is represented as invested with immense power in the context of political society. The social sphere is clearly indicated to be urban, political, and tumultuous, as the spatial metaphor of "in the roar of cities or the broil of politics" intimates. The importance of sound in its violent implications hints to the contemporary conditions of the discussion of controversies and negotiation of conflicting agendas. The narrator goes further and particularizes "agitation," "terror," and "revolution" as the characteristics of the political realm of his times, indirectly referencing the mode of the negotiation of such divergent issues as the multifarious endeavors of reform and the formation of embittered oppositions and parties, as noted in the second section of the present thesis. In this difficult and demanding environment, the "solemn images" expressive of nature's principles are to endow the poet with "the spells of persuasion" and the metaphorical "keys of power" to impact decisively his contemporary sociopolitical reality. More precisely, the narrator attributes the power to provide the poet and the orator with the "fit symbols and words" to classify the current situations and, by implication, to infer the right actions in accordance with the principles of nature. To put differently, the words and actions that allow the accurate understanding of the matters discussed, mandating power in the world of politics, are represented to be learnt and internalized only through the contemplation of nature. Hence the adjective in the phrase "solemn images" points to the seriousness of the impressions bestowed, and the adjective in "fit symbols and words" hints to the practical applicability and suitable character of the aforementioned "lessons."

The power of the impressions that the individual is raised to appreciate and whose principles he is prompted to apply to the sphere of the political derives from rhizomatic panopticism. Again, an accumulating enumeration of the phenomena of the natural world invokes the rhizomatic principle of multiplicity by which the poet feels to be perceived as "the woods wave" and "the pines murmur" to him. These personified trees remind the poet of his subjection to nature's gaze. At the same time, the narrator states that the recollection of these personified and gazing elements of nature is contingent upon the gaze of the poet, who "saw and heard them in his infancy." It grows apparent that the superiority of thought and expression fostered by this "noble image" constitutes itself in the invocation of the very interaction of the reciprocating gazes, perceptibly directed at the individual from various spaces, who on their part are subject to the individual's gaze, as well. Differently expressed, the adjective "noble," which specifies the impression bestowed on the individual by nature, idealizes the relations between the poet and his environment subsequently described, thus presenting it as an ideal to transfer to the sociopolitical arena. It is this relation of gazes specific to rhizomatic panopticism that underlines the difference between the tumultuous noise of the political and the calm clarity of the natural sphere, facilitating the latter. The above-mentioned imagery pertaining to the blares of political discussion creates an impression of chaos, and thereby upholds the contemporary judgment regarding a lack of transparency in politics, explained in this thesis' second section. Contrasting with the construction of chaos through noise in the realm of politics is the composition of quiet in the sphere of the natural, the only reference to sound being the hushed "murmur" of the trees, starkly opposed to the loud "roar" of politics. An inversely proportional relation between sight and noise is thereby established. Since the correct, rhizomatically panoptic exercise of the gaze can be inferred from nature, an environment of clarity and transparency can be achieved by transferring its logic of reciprocity, transparency, and connection into the social sphere, thereby superseding the confusion of the clamor of ardent debates.

Movement

Another principle that Paine expresses to inform the astronomical arrangement of planets and suns is the extensive connectivity of the spatial make up. When Paine claims that "no part of space lies at waste" or "remains unoccupied" (*The Age* 708), but that "systems of

worlds" (ibid.) are to be found everywhere, the importance of connection and relation, or of connectivity and relativity grows patent. Rather than being empty and not to be grasped, every fraction of the totality of space is represented as relating to known structures, describable and definable through relations and connections to known objects and their arrangements in space. Motion and connectivity acquire a distinctly visual character when Paine concludes that "[a]ll the planets revolve in sight of each other; and therefore the same universal school of science presents itself to all" (*The Age* 709).

Just as is the case with multiplicity, the notion of movement is also fraught with structural potentials that evidence the need to remain aware of hierarchies. Again, Paine mediates this awareness of hierarchical structures in his description of the design of solar systems, whose structures are defined by objects that both do and do not exhibit movement:

> Beyond this, at a vast distance into space, far beyond all power of calculation, are the stars called the fixed stars. They are called fixed, because they have no revolutionary motion as the six worlds or planets have that I have been describing. Those fixed stars continue always at the same distance from each other, and always in the same place, as the Sun does in the center of our system. The probability therefore is, that each of those fixed stars is also a sun, round which another system of worlds or planets, though too remote for us to discover, performs its revolutions, as our system of worlds does round our central sun. (Paine, *The Age* 708)

While the "fixed stars" (*The Age* 708) are defined through their central position, they are also, and primarily, described by Paine as lacking "revolutionary motion" (ibid.), for they "continue always at the same distance from each other, and always in the same place" (ibid.). The "fixed stars" function as the examples of immobility against which the motion of the "worlds" is perceptible and defined. And it is this lack of movement, or this rigidity, that introduces the awareness of hierarchies back into the argument for a structural analogy between nature and society.

As said at the outset of the present chapter, movement functions as a materialization of the rhizomatically panoptic gaze in different passages of both Paine's and Emerson's texts. As such, movement in both Paine and Emerson is represented as establishing connections

between the elements of a multiplicity, which is of paramount importance for the establishment of a space, metaphorical and concrete, that has the structural preconditions to serve as the site of a development and negotiation of a democratic society, particularly one oriented towards the structural features of rhizomatic panopticism. Paine's elaboration on the development of sciences on the basis of the observation of astronomical phenomena explicates the principle of the transformation of rhizomatically panoptic gazes and their interplay into movement:

> It is the structure of the universe that has taught this knowledge to man. That structure is an ever existing exhibition of every principle upon which every part of mathematical science is founded. The offspring of this science is mechanics; for mechanics is no other than the principles of science applied practically. The man who proportions the several parts of a mill, uses the same scientific principles, as if he had the power of constructing an universe: but as he cannot give to matter that invisible agency, by which all the component parts of the immense machine of the universe have influence upon each other, and act in motional unison together without any apparent contact, and to which man has given the name of attraction, gravitation, and repulsion, he supplies the place of that agency by the humble imitation of teeth and cogs. All the parts of man's microcosm must visibly touch. But could he gain a knowledge of that agency, so as to be able to apply it in practice, we might then say, that another *canonical book* of the word of God had been discovered. (Paine, *The Age* 693; emphasis in the original)

In this passage, apparently autonomous motion of the astronomical bodies induced by the forces operating between them is elevated to a chief trace of the divine authorship of these phenomena. It is likewise represented as the only difference between the endeavors of the human being in the process of applying "mechanics" and the deity's creation of bodies that can move without any apparent or visible influence upon them. The juxtaposition of the human being "who proportions the several parts of a mill" the Creator is mediated through the subjunctive construction of "as if he had the power of constructing an universe" and may strike one as irreverent towards the deity at firs. Larkin attributes the peculiar connection of different sciences to Paine's investment in democracy and "popular politics,"

stating that "[b]y associating mechanics directly with astronomy and mathematics Paine elevates what would be considered a rather low-grade science from its menial status to one of significance, thus rendering knowledge of the universe available to a wider segment of people" (142, 143). Larkin further suggests that on account of this apparent democratization of scientific methods, it is fair to say that "Paine's democratic mechanic is the urban analogue of Jefferson's republican farmer" as Paine's "ideal democratic nation […] rests on a vision of equally idealized urban artisans and laborers" (147), thereby proposing one reading of Paine's implicit construction of an ideal and normative citizen.

Larkin's suggestion regarding the democratic appeal of a juxtaposition of sciences and the concomitant character of the normative citizen in mind, I propose, in anticipation of next chapter's thorough discussion of the normative citizen in Paine and Emerson, that this seemingly too enthusiastic and daring juxtaposition of the human being and the deity is once again illustrative of the powerful process of becoming which forms the basis on which self-rule is conceptually built in Paine: The intense, oscillating visual contact with the deity, visible in the creation that it has brought forth, leads to the understanding of the principles that represent the deity's provisions. The process of becoming induced, the human being managed to retain and incorporate some of those divine characteristics and principles into himself. Thus, the juxtaposition is not so much an act of malicious irreverence toward the deity, but rather the exemplification of a core democratic attitude. This exemplification actualizes itself on two grounds: Firstly, Paine grants the human being, in principle, the very same capacities as he does the entity representing the highest authority and power. Secondly, Paine postulates the human being who incorporated into his being an awareness of scientific principles and natural laws, with the intention of applying them himself, to have likewise incorporated something of the divine, thereby instituting himself together with fellow human beings as part of the sovereign, wielding the highest authority when it comes to the allocation of power. As elucidated, this process of becoming divine is how Paine conceives of the calibration of popular sovereignty.

The quality, however, which does not allow itself to be transcribed from the divine onto the human being is what Paine refers to as "giv[ing] matter that invisible agency, by which all the component parts of the immense machine of the universe have influence upon each other" (Paine, *The Age* 693). Instead of being granted the ability of employing "that invisible agency," Paine states that "[a]ll the parts of man's microcosm must visibly

touch" (Paine, *The Age* 693). The statement is highly ambiguous, referring to both, the inventions of a human being and also the context in terms of society and politics into which the human being is implicated. Thus, the alliteration of "man's microcosm" seems to refer a human being's product created in emulation of the divine provisions evidenced and codified in the shape of science; it can also refer to the human being's surroundings and immediate environment. The first version of this passage's reading may indeed be understood as a statement of a shortcoming of the human being and thus a slight subversion or, at least, as a qualification of the juxtaposition of the human being and the godhead. Focusing on the latter possibility of reading the passage, one can once again state that it is visibility that is privileged and which defines the structure. Motion and vision are nearly equated, as the elements in human inventions that facilitate movement, namely "teeth and cogs," are represented first and foremost in terms of their visibility.

The depiction of movement and of the capability to furnish a system's elements with it as divine and commendable allows Paine to materialize the feature of connectivity and further operationalize it for the purpose of a sociopolitical structural outline. Movement transposes visual connectivity into physical connectivity, postulating that every position within the social structure is theoretically within reach from every other position, horizontally or geographically, and vertically or economically. The self-sustained motion of every individual or group of individuals is this presented as one characteristic of the normative sociopolitical outline. These motions and the relations that grow out of them are all still subject to the mandates of visibility and transparency. It is this potential connectivity through movement that conditions a sociopolitical structure that supports fundamentally democratic relations between its multifarious elements. In that regard, once again a parallel between Paine and Hannah Arendt grows apparent. Martín Plot analyzes Arendt's conception of democracy and states that

> the public space was for her, not only the place where everybody sees and hears from a different perspective but also, precisely because of that, the fundamental intersubjective mechanism for the constitution of a sense of reality and the emergence of the kind of power and concerted action that keep societies robust and durable […]. (77)

For Paine, movement functions as such a "fundamental intersubjective mechanism" that is nearly synonymous with the "public space." Movement in Paine's text is set to transcend subjectivity as it not only allows for a literal exchange of specific positions, but also because it is meant to impart verifiable knowledge irrespective of one's position within the system; just as observation of the movement of the heavenly bodies functions as the basis of sciences, so the movements of individuals and groups provide the basis on which the realm of the social, or in Plot's words "a sense of reality" is founded.

The importance of motion for the rhizome is a core postulate and the importance Paine places on this feature in his depiction of the characteristics of the natural sphere that exude a benefic effect on the human being renders his conception of the idealized society akin to a rhizome. As Arie Graafland points out in his analysis of the rhizomatic landscape of the city of Amsterdam, the rhizome must be considered "a figure of thought" which

> cannot be reduced to a number of discrete components, as it does not consist of units but of dimensions, or, more accurately, of dimensions in motion. There is no beginning and no end, but there is always a specific environment in which the rhizome thrives. Unlike a structure with set coordinates, the rhizome consists solely of temporary characteristics and provisional ideas, ideas that are perpetually in development. These can result in a deterritorialization, which, in turn, leads to other developments. (30)

What thus characterizes Paine's outline as rhizomatic is the attention given to the relations or "temporal characteristics" in the shape of features such as "attraction," "gravitation," and "repulsion" (*The Age* 693). While Paine presents these characteristics as generally applicable laws and thus might seem to counteract their classification as "temporal" according to Graafland's rendition of the rhizome, it must also be acknowledged that these characteristics in and of themselves condition a dynamic relationship of the system's constituent elements rather than a static one. Paine himself extols the "motional unison" (*The Age* 693) as the chief goal when it comes to translating the idealized features of the natural sphere. Herein one might detect a trace of the prescriptive necessity of harmony so prevalent in Paine's days in both the Early Republic and revolutionary France explained in the previous chapters: Rather than focusing in the potentially conflicting and mutually

upsetting relations that might form in a system thus characterized by movement and dynamic relations, Paine avers that it is "unison" which most aptly describes the interaction of the constituent elements of the system in their motion. This assertion of "motional unison" and the implied norm of harmony, even in the face of diversity and heterogeneity, resonates with Paine's concern regarding the negative impact of "factions" expressed later texts, identifying specific divisions and groups such as "the Federalists" and "the Jacobins" to have compromised rather than aided the democratizing potentials of both of the revolutions that he witnessed (cf. Blakemore 74, 75).

The representations of movement to be found in *Nature* have been awarded academic attention on many occasions. The implicit expression of an enthusiasm for technological advance as well as of particular political sympathies is taken to motivate passages such as the following:

> The useful arts are reproductions or new combinations by the wit of man, of the same natural benefactors. He no longer waits for favoring gales, but by means of steam, he realizes the fable of Aeolus's bag, and carries the two and thirty winds in the boiler of his boat. To diminish friction, he paves the road with iron bars, and mounting a coach with a ship-load of men, animals, and merchandise behind him, he darts through the country, from town to town, like an eagle or a swallow through the air. (Emerson 12, 13)

Referring to this passage, Richard Poirier establishes that an impression is invoked "in which transport is an aspect of transformation and of transition from one state to another," merging "poetry and industry" to give expression to "the still emergent 'genius' of the race" ("The Question of Genius" 186). While Poirier, in this instance, is fundamentally interested in the representation of transformation as a sphere in which the concept of "genius" is negotiated in Emerson's work and, therefore, does not exceedingly foreground the profound contemporary innovations in America's transportation system as informing this passage in *Nature*, he does relate the mention of transportation to a specific time of accelerated technological and infrastructural development during the Antebellum. Dolan qualifies this segment as a "paean to technology and industrialism" (*Emerson's Liberalism* 86) indicative of an expansive understanding of nature as conceptually reconcilable with

"Enlightenment science" as well as the with the idea of "Romantic flora and fauna" (ibid. 87). Thereby, according to Dolan, *Nature* perpetuates "a full-fledged Enlightenment conception of historical progress" in a "classical-liberal political" conviction that it is the "nonpolitical liberal citizen" who profits most from industrialization and the technological innovations it renders possible (ibid.). Furthermore, Dolan maintains that this passage exposes "particular political sympathies" for the Whig party, as the developments chosen "for approving example" belong to the undertakings championed by Jackson's opponents ("Property in Being" 357). In line with Dolan's argument is an interpretation of this sketch of mobility through technological innovation as an idealization of the enhancement of transportation systems and, more importantly, of the territorial expansion during the Antebellum: The said technological enhancement was not only demanded by Whigs, but also by "Westerners" who wanted to secure the connection to the markets in the East as well as to "open frontier lands for settlements" (Bureau of International Information Programs 112, 113). Indeed, the description of these travelling modes is reminiscent of the settlers setting out to inhabit the lands to be seized and incorporated into the expanding nation. As Johannes Voelz points out analyzing various examples of critical, revisionist scholarship on Transcendentalist literature, the interpretation of Emerson's work in general as profoundly informed by the contemporary hegemonic discourses of expansion, imperialism, and Manifest Destiny is the common approach chosen by "New Americanists" (180-189).

Both Poirier's and Dolan's evaluations of the quoted instance of *Nature* as well as the New Americanist view of Transcendentalism correspond with Michael P. Branch's summary of the chapter of "Commodity," from which the passage discussed is taken, to be expressive of "science's ability to harness nature's power in service of material progress" (233). Especially when reading "Commodity" against "Discipline," such an evaluation seems justified, as in that latter chapter the narrator remarks that

> [n]ature is thoroughly mediate. It is made to serve. It receives the dominion of man as meekly as the ass on which the Saviour rode. It offers all its kingdoms to man as the raw material which he may mould into what is useful. (Emerson 28)

By means of an emphatic adverb, the first sentence determines and underscores the natural sphere as a transitional space whose forms are to be shaped by another force. The association of "man" with "the Saviour" in the three following anaphoric sentences, which reduce the natural sphere to a pronoun and in which this sphere is likened to the "ass" that follows the commands of its rider, highlights its obedience to the human kind. At the same time, man is presented as exulted to a state of divine power when thus interacting with nature. The naming of "raw material" seems to further diminish the significance of the natural sphere to the function of "a reservoir of raw materials for use" (Richardson 230), whose eventual utilization depends entirely on what man considers "useful." This sketch of the apparent subjugation of nature to the goals of human kind can validate the above-mentioned interpretations of *Nature's* representation of transportation as a victory in making nature aid objectives of scientific and technological advancement.

In view of this thesis' analysis of the reciprocating directions of power between the individual and nature, however, the alleged rule of mankind over the natural sphere has to be evaluated as not one-sided. As I postulate the reason on account of which nature "receives the dominion of man" to be the panoptic gaze emanating from the individual, which is always reciprocated by the natural world to make man experience its "dominion" in return, I interpret the description of transportation quoted first in this section not as an example of the imposition of human purposes on natural forces, but rather as a replication of these natural forces by man. Analyzing the representation of language in Nature, Newfield comes to the conclusion that "Emersonian invention is a variety of mimesis" (45), however does not regard possible qualifications to a narrative of progressivist idealization of technology that an application of this conclusion to the representation of transport might allow. Reading transportation's depiction as precisely a "variety of mimesis" or replication of the principles of idealized nature, I suggest that this passage establishes movement as one model way of action, transposed into the realm of the social sphere. Referring to the technological achievements of the era, in a generalizing way termed "new combinations by the wit of man" (Emerson 12, 13) the narrator ascribes the creativity patent therein to an interpretation of natural facts and phenomena. Especially the previous classification of these achievements as "reproductions" (ibid.) then paraphrased as "new combinations" (ibid.), points less to the mentioned control over and exploitation of nature than to the replication of an ideal and the principles behind the ideal. Interestingly, these replicated phenomena

are personified and presented in a positive light as “natural benefactors” (ibid.), implying their helpfulness to the individual, but also their knowledgeable, if welcoming, superiority over man. One of these “benefactors” is the “favoring gale” (ibid.) equally personified and represented as of assistance to the human being. By means of the juxtaposition of this particular natural force and modern vehicles powered “by means of steam” (ibid.) the principle and final use of the windstorm is defined to be movement, serving as an inspiration for the inventions. The construction of railways is constructed the same logic of movement primarily exemplified in nature. In different words, movement through technology is not represented as the result of a forceful cooptation of natural potential to achieve a goal inspired solely by human kind’s aspirations; much rather, it represents a particular materialization of the principle of movement found in the idealized space of nature.

This particular portrayal of movement in society serves as a frame for the construction of a possible transference of the principles of rhizomatic panopticism into the social sphere. For example, the movement found in nature and replicated by means of technology in the sphere of the social fosters connection, rendering this sphere more rhizomatic. The fact that this movement is specifically described to occur “from town to town” (ibid.), expresses a general glorification of movement through particular inhabited locales, relating them without highlighting centers or establishing hierarchies. Since movement represents connection, of several cities in this example, it can well be said that the function of the panoptic gaze experiences a variation and materialization: The potential of the gaze to reach every plateau in the rhizome of nature is transferred in its fundamental principle on the material aspects of movement. In the same vein, the enumeration of a “ship-load of men, animals, and merchandise” (ibid.) is conspicuous as it hints toward a “fascination for the pack, for multiplicity” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 280), which Deleuze and Guattari thought necessary to experience in order to grasp the implications of the rhizome for the individual. Rather than supplementing an understanding of individual integrity and singularity, movement aids and foregrounds a conception of multiplicity. Closely related to the experience of multiplicity and contestation of singular integrity is the conceptual abandonment of a definition of the self as human in Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy. Hence, the comparison between the modes of movement of the group of individuals to that of “an eagle or a swallow” (Emerson 12, 13) can be seen as a vestige of the concept of “becoming animal” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 280) by virtue of the experience of a particular line

of flight, gaze becoming movement in this case. Becoming animal, according to the poststructuralists, is another way of experiencing the intensity of acquiring a "Body without Organs" (ibid. 319). It can be said that movement in society thus comes to comprise the rhizomatic principles of connection, multiplicity, and becoming, investing the rhizomatic gaze of the natural sphere with a physical shape.

In contrast to Paine, Emerson constructs the gaze in itself as a powerful agent of quasi-material transformation. The reliance of Emerson's outline of an ideal, normative political structure and society on the process of sight is reinforced when he writes about the acquisition of this ideal social construct as introduced by a change in sight. Before concluding the tract, he undertakes a brief description of a state in which the human being has acquired the desirable relationship with spirit and nature, introducing his last paragraph with the statement "[s]o shall we come to look at the world with new eyes" (Emerson 48). The transformative character of the gaze is once again employed in this instance to elucidate the process by virtue of which the ideal of a society comes into existence. Again, the gaze and the bodily organ associated with it receive valorization as those elements that induce becoming on the sphere of the social and the political.

Naturally, this passage also functions and carries meaning with a code less specific to the tract of *Nature*, but more congruent with the common associations bestowed on the organs of sight and the faculties they imply. In this context, "look[ing] at the world with new eyes" seems simply to refer to a renewed and enhanced understanding of one's environment, more in line with the provisions of the "spirit" and of "truth" as constructed in the context of *Nature*. Yet the more widely used code that associates visual perception with understanding does not appear without an aspect of meaning that implies a nearly material influence on the natural world. This grows clear regarding the statements following immediately: "It shall answer the endless inquiry of the intellect, – What is truth? and of the affections, – What is good? by yielding itself passive to the educated Will" (Emerson 48). This passage represents both, vision as understanding of and as quasi-material impact on one's surroundings. The previously mentioned "new eyes" thus induce the world to give answers to questions focusing on concepts fundamental to Emerson's interest in stating the purpose of nature. Under these "new eyes," the world is "yielding itself passive to the educated Will," which demands the answers. Again, the gaze of the "new eyes" seems to effectuate a process of becoming in the material world, promoting it to make the process of

understanding possible by providing insights into the concepts at the heart of the quoted questions and by becoming "passive," thus allowing the operations necessary to foster understanding to be executed upon it. In this manner, Emerson generates the more common conception of vision as understanding out of his own conception of vision as quasi-material impact.

As the tract sets out to uncover the purpose of the natural world, such a supposed explanation implicitly carried out at the very end of the tract explaining a mainstream notion in terms of his own thesis regarding his guiding question seems very fitting. It also corresponds to the method used in the chapter on "Language" as Emerson, once again, demonstrates how figures of speech and every-day expressions pertain to very particular natural phenomena and the human being's interaction with these phenomena. A recurrence to this method at the very end of the tract, especially in order to deal with the most central concept of vision and to once again claim its potential metaphorical and colloquial semantic aspects for the core thesis of the tract, seems like a logical strategic step in order to both, render the text more cohesive and generate the impression of the thesis's totality and of its essential applicability.

As grows apparent after the close reading of several passages of *The Age of Reason*, Paine does not represent the gaze as equally capable of effectuating material transformations as does Emerson. I attribute this distinction once again to the authors' respective historical contexts of writing and the concomitant difference in their respective evaluations of visual processes such as supervision or surveillance. As previously stated, Paine's first-hand experience of sojourning in a prison as well as the witnessing of the abuses of surveilling power during the Terror in France preclude him from developing too favourable a depiction of the material impact of the gaze. As the passages read so far indicate, Paine constructs the gaze as a connective device and also as the basis for acquiring and imparting knowledge, not however as a tool that allows for a direct manipulation of matter. Emerson, on the other hand, appropriates this approach and thereby exemplifies the Antebellum's reliance on an increasing amount and variety of surveilling mechanisms.

Material Conditions

As intimated in the preceding section, movement, into which both authors translate the connective and didactic aspects of the rhizomatically panoptic gaze, lends itself to a metaphorical treatment of the issue of material conditions within a society, to which such aspects as social mobility also count. The vertical movement and the theoretical facility thereof as represented in both authors' texts implies a sociopolitical structure in which both upward and downward social mobility are a crucial feature of the normative sociopolitical outline. Yet both authors also make ample direct reference to matters of finance and material possessions in connection with political issues. Paine, for example, exposes a very concrete link between the structural characteristics of a society as well as its polity and the material and economic circumstances prevalent within it. The examination of Paine's criticism of equating guilt with debt in the context of Christianity yields better understanding of his conception and evaluation of representation in connection with his views on the material conditions of society:

> The invention of a purgatory, and of the releasing of souls therefrom, by prayers, bought of the church with money; the selling of pardons, dispensations, and indulgences, are revenue laws, without bearing that name or carrying that appearance. But the case nevertheless is, that those things derive their origin from the paroxysm of the crucifixion, and the theory deduced therefrom, which was, that one person could stand in the place of another, and could perform meritorious services for him. the probability therefore is, that the whole theory or doctrine of what is called the redemption (which is said to have been accomplished by the act of one person in the room of another) was originally fabricated on purpose to bring forward and build all those secondary and pecuniary redemptions upon; and that the passages in the books upon which the idea or theory of redemption is built, have been manufactured and fabricated for that purpose. (Paine, *The Age* 684)

In this passage, Paine draws attention to the very material implications of Christian doctrine, making clear that "[a]s an engine of power, it served despotism. As a means to wealth, it served the avarice of priests" (Smylie 208). Paine thus begins this passage by unmasking the dependence between religion, economy, and politics by addressing the church practices of "pardons, dispensations, and indulgences" (*The Age* 684). He labels these practices as

disguised “revenue laws,” thereby showing their political import: Rather than marking these practices as merely an approach to the maximization of income, he employs a term that applies, first and foremost, to state and governmental methods of generating and increasing income. Especially the noun “laws” references the sphere of the political, and combined with the first noun “revenue,” Paine almost employs technical terms from the semantic field of national macroeconomics. This definition represents church practices as indicative of a state- or government-like structure on the basis of its material organization. Next, Paine names the ideology that enables and nurtures the said shape of material organization. This ideology he identifies as “the proxysm of the crucifixion” and more precisely as “the theory […] that one person could stand in the place of another, and could perform meritorious services for him” (Paine, *The Age* 684). In other words, Paine identifies the ideological underpinnings of what enables the church to enforce unjustified financial demands to be a flawed understanding of the mechanisms and implications of representation.

The interesting feature of the formulation employed by Paine in this sentence is the adoption of an inference from the specific to the general: He starts out with the very particular incident of the “crucifixion” and the notions of representation or “proxysm” thereby implies the church doctrine of redemption. Subsequently, he leaves behind the specific context of the doctrine of redemption by stating that the incident of the “crucifixion” gave rise to a “theory” of representation. This theory, however, does not appear as contextualized in a religious sphere only. The observation regarding representational modes is worded in so general a manner as to suggest its applicability to any situation in which “one person could stand in the place of another” (Paine, *The Age* 684), which is, of course, not at all limited to the doctrine of redemption. This generalization repeats itself in the subsequent sentence in a nearly verbatim way when functioning as a parenthetical relative clause to qualify the “theory or doctrine of redemption” (Paine, *The Age 684*). Here, Paine once again draws attention to the general principle of “the act of one person in the room of another,” from which he postulates the doctrine of redemption to proceed. To put differently, Paine considers the doctrine to be but one manifestation of the representational principle, and one with a particular function that can exude its effect in any kind of organizational structure, which in this particular instance is the church.

It is in this context also to be noted that Paine prefers to employ a kind of metanoia in his categorization of “redemption,” thereby achieving that the hyperonym of “doctrine”

with its distinctively theological connotation never appears exclusively. Much rather, Paine supplements this theological term of "doctrine" with a more general, less specifically connoted hyperonym, namely "theory," which could pertain to the semantic field of natural science just as well as to that of politics or the law. Again, Paine achieves to de-emphasize the strongly religious or theological import of the problem at hand and implicitly iterates his conviction that larger mechanisms are to be recognized in this particular example. Together with the aforementioned use of the legal and political term "law," the hyperonym of "theory" reinforces the perception of a considerable and intentional overlap with discourses on the organization of political and social structures in general.

The function and the effect receive some attention immediately after the stated observations: Paine gives to consider that there is the possibility that "the whole theory or doctrine of what is called the redemption […] was originally fabricated on purpose to bring forward and build all those secondary and pecuniary redemptions upon" (Paine, *The Age* 684). Here, Paine clearly states that the introduction of a particular mechanism of representation in a specific organizational structure can be used to affect the material conditions of that structure, and to subsequently legitimize the constant reproduction of those material conditions. Once again, the church seems to serve merely as an example of a larger mechanism, as the focus is so strongly pointed to material, financial arrangements; the entire paragraph and the passages so far analyzed are significantly shaped by vocabulary pertaining to financial transactions. Apart from the already mentioned "revenue laws," Paine refers to "prayers" having to be "bought […] with money," to the practice of the "selling" of different certificates of redemption, and to the decidedly "pecuniary" interest of the church in promulgating the doctrine of redemption (Paine, *The Age* 684).

While Paine establishes the deconstruction of church and Biblical authority as the subject and goal of *The Age of Reason*, the steady employment of generalizing paraphrases and structural analyses when it comes to dealing with religious practices constantly creates overlaps with the semantic field of politics. In this manner, Paine points to avenues into the investigation of other organizational structures on the basis of the parameters he lays down for his analysis of religion and religious authority in *The Age of Reason*. In this instance, Paine admonishes the reader to develop an understanding of the interrelatedness between ideological and material aspects within an organizational structure, thereby fostering an awareness that is at the heart of critical inquiry into social organization. In the subsequent

part if the present paragraph, Paine seems to indicate that those with the needed dispositives to stake the distribution of power in their own favor will undoubtedly do so and that these dispositives can be ideological in nature, pertaining in this instance to a particular narrative of the crucifixion and its alleged metaphysical motivations and effects. Material conditions are thus presented not as naturalized manifestations of a higher truth in social or human-made structures, but as the result of very particular processes of power acquisition and distribution, some of which came into effect too long ago to be fully transparent and comprehensible to the onlookers at any given point in time.

The mechanism of representation that centers on Jesus Christ is almost ridiculed in its redundance when Paine points out the presence of the church as yet another interface between the believer as subject and the divine as source of executive power. This element once again obstructs a direct interaction by appearing as both, a representative of the divine who can issue imperatives to be followed by the subjects, and as the instance that communicates with the divine on behalf of, and thereby as a representative of, the believer as subject. While Christ, however, serves as an element in a theory, the church as an institution active in the present has the means to materially impact the lives of the subjects by virtue of its status as the de-facto highest source of executive power, as it will not permit its own circumvention in communicating with the divine. The divine, in this instance of Protestant and Catholic Christianity based upon the New Testament, is primarily conceived as Jesus Christ, who, as said, represents an interface in the first place. The mechanism of representation is thus, as Paine shows, operative on two planes, the ideological, theoretical plane, and also on the material, organizational plane. The instance of obstruction on the organizational plane can thus use its authority to further its won interests and to reproduce its own power, doing so, correspondingly, by once again reproducing the narrative of the necessity of representation, this time invoking a mechanism of remuneration for the representing rendered.

By drawing attention to these various levels of representation in the forms of “redemption” and “secondary and pecuniary redemptions” in place in religious and church organization, Paine criticizes and ridicules this organizational structure. He particularly emphasizes its aptness to be used in order to further the particular, material interests of one group of historically privileged individuals, while minimizing other individuals’ direct access to power. Reading this passage against those passages focusing on the direct perception of

divine directives through the visual observation of natural phenomena, one gathers the negative evaluation of the principle of representation for political structures that permeates *The Age of Reason*. Instead, direct and unobstructed access to power and participation in power-related processes seems to be advocated. Distrust and suspicion generally describe the attitude towards historically developed elites and their assumption of politically and socially relevant, powerful positions on the basis of their inherited status. The system advocated by Paine thus also seems to be inherently anti-elitist. This is, however, not to imply that the notion of privilege does not play a role in Paine's socio-political outline. Clearly, Paine's ideal, normative citizen is defined by a set of privileges on which the access to power and the ability to exercise it as a subject in a political system rests; this topic will receive a detailed consideration in the next chapter.

To Paine, the role which the Bible assumes is equally implicated in safeguarding the preservation of a historically developed status quo that does not voluntarily permit of change. Hence, he prefaces his deconstruction of the content of the Bible with a criticism of its assumed historicity:

> These books, beginning with Genesis and ending with Revelations […] are, we are told, the word of God. It is therefore proper for us to know who told us so, that we may know what credit to give to the report. The answer to this question is, that nobody can tell, except that we tell one another so. The case, however, historically appears to be as follows:
>
> When the church mythologists established their system, they collected all the writings they could find, and managed them as they pleased. It is a matter altogether of uncertainty to us whether such of the writings which now appear, under the name of the Old and the New Testament, are in the same state in which those collectors say they found them; or whether they added, altered, abridged, or dressed them up. (Paine, *The Age* 675)

He describes the manner in which the text of the Bible came into the shape known to his readers as one of compilation by "the church mythologists" (*The Age* 675). Rather than directly transmitting divinely revealed texts to the public, these "collectors" (ibid.), as Paine suggests, "collected all the writings they could find, and managed them as they pleased (ibid.). This circumstance, according to Paine, makes it highly doubtful whether the texts

now constituting the Bible "are in the same state in which those collectors say they found them; or whether they added, altered, abridged, or dressed them up" (Paine, *The Age* 675). The alliteration employed to express the threefold manner of textual corruption carried out by the church functionaries heightens the impact of Paine's accusation. The phonetic similarity in this instance adds to an effect of unity, endorsing formally Paine's t thesis that the church's treatment of Biblical texts conforms to a larger, overarching, unified goal of securing power for itself.

In light of points of criticism brought up by Paine later in the tract, the use of the term "collectors" to refer to church functionaries in charge of shaping the Bible seems highly conspicuous. Here, the "collectors" are purported to compile texts in order to present them in a manner advantageous to their project of acquiring and preserving power. Presently, Paine also offers a criticism regarding the practice of demanding money for "pardons, dispensations, and indulgences" – practices Paine views as de facto "revenue laws" instituted by the church (Paine, *The Age* 684). This criticism directly follows Paine's lengthy deconstruction of Biblical textual passages in order to dismantle the "internal evidence" (ibid. 675) for divine authority to which those texts lay claim according to the church. As the term "collectors" can very well refer to the systematic acquisition of financial means, especially in the form of tax-based "revenue," two semantic fields are activated simultaneously: the overtly referenced one of compiling texts, and the implicitly invoked one of financial interactions. In this manner, Paine foreshadows his critique of the financial dealings of the church, while at the same time implicitly pointing to the connection between the ideological sphere of presenting of texts in a specific way in order to acquire and preserve power, and the material acquisition of power through the extraction of money from believers, on the ideological basis of the very texts compiled and disseminated.

Again, Paine criticizes the interference of another element between the individual believer as subject and the divine as source of executive power; this interference appears in the shape of the Bible, instituted and upheld by yet another element that inserts itself between the subject and "authority" as executive power, namely by the church. The impossibility to ascertain the veracity of the historical claims and therefore the appropriateness of the claims to power is a central concern for Paine; he does not tire of emphasizing that it is the incapability of human kind to thoroughly examine the past which conditions present conditions of the allocation of power and privilege, focusing specifically

on the church: “Who the people were that did all this, we know nothing of; they called themselves by the general name of the church; and this is all we know of the matter” (Paine, *The Age* 675). Historically established privilege seems to be the concern at the heart of the observation regarding the tracking the precise identity of those responsible for the corruption of the texts described shortly before. Here, Paine points to the opaqueness of power relations that formed in the past, making it difficult to trace the processes by which any one particular status quo has developed. Further, this passage elucidates the power of collective association when it comes to obscuring current power relations and their historical development.

The institution of the church is, as Paine goes on to point out, “no evidence or authority at all” (Paine, *The Age* 675). Here, his insistence on the divine as the only source of power and instance of authority grows clear once again. Any elements inserting themselves between this divine authority and the individual Paine deconstructs as spurious and bent only on the malicious manipulation of social, political, and economic power structures. Again, Paine’s use of metanoia merits attention because of its association of two terms vital to his definition of the divine. These two associated terms are “evidence” and “authority.” Linked by the coordinating conjunction “or,” they are suggested to be interchangeable in this context. That “authority” pertains to the semantic field of the divine in Paine’s Deist system of thought has been, as shown, rendered clear at various points in *The Age of Reason*. The presentation of “evidence” as interchangeable with that concept of “authority” so closely associated with Paine’s notion of the divine reinforces his alignment with scientific Deism. As God is postulated to render the divine tenets equally accessible and understandable to all of the subjects, “evidence” to be ascertained by means of observation or logical deduction pertains to the divine in a similar manner.

Emerson’s depiction of material conditions lacks the clearly defined adversary present in Paine and against whose negative example the ideal can be constructed by implication. Emerson, instead, further pursues his Idealist logic and explicates the implications of the thesis that immaterial conditions determine material ones. Not surprisingly, his depiction of material conditions in a normative society is not likewise an admonition to a way of thinking critical of presently existing institutions, as is the case with Paine. Quite the contrary, Emerson’s depiction of what predicates material conditions can be

evaluated as rather more reminiscent of hegemonic legitimizations and normalizations of existing conditions:

> Man and woman, and their social life, poverty, labor, sleep, fear, fortune, are known to you. Learn that none of these things is superficial, but that each phenomenon has its roots in the faculties and affections of the mind. Whilst the abstract question occupies your intellect, nature brings it in the concrete to be solved by your hands. It were a wise inquiry for the closet, to compare, point by point, especially at remarkable crises in life, our daily history, with the rise and progress of ideas in the mind. (Emerson 48)

After establishing that every human mind is in effect connected with the divine as the highest power in the universe, these instructions rise above a merely spiritual imperative to monitor one's thoughts, but can be read to have a distinctly political implication. In most general terms, this passage posits that material circumstances in the lives of individuals depend directly on their interaction with and use of power. Such an explanation of material circumstances, though mediated by the spiritual discourse of a literal and totalized idealism, is of an evidently political import and betrays a keen understanding of the interdependences between politics and economy in society generally and in individual lives in particular. Emerson formulates the imperative to be aware of these interdependences, implying that the ideal citizen of the society projected in *Nature* would seek to explain material conditions in terms of power constellations.

A reading taking only denotational significations of the words used into account would naturally arrive at a very different conclusion regarding Emerson's insights into the genesis of material conditions in a society. Such a reading would expose Emerson as strongly aligned with a hegemonic, individualist narrative of cause and effect in the realm of economics. The cause of the effect of a particular economic circumstance is here said to lie in the sphere of the mind, an aspect accessible only to the individual affected and thus only to be impacted, negatively or positively, by that very individual. Looking at the meanings of "faculties and affections of the mind" literally, as localized in and characteristic of, particular individuals, one could read this passage as fortification of a very widespread interpretation of Emerson in particular and Transcendentalist literature in general as supportive of

hegemonic narratives of Individualism, and thus conducive to structures of both capitalist and imperial structures of exploitation and expansion. This reading and potential of meaning is certainly never to be discounted and will be, to an extent, present in every reading of the passage in question.

However, I suggest that this aspect of meaning does not exhaust potential significations of the established relation between "mind" and matter, given that the "mind" is invested with aspects of meaning that are absent from the concepts denotational definition and common usage. Emerson posits a mindfulness of one's relation to and own use of power as a key feature of the ideal or normative citizen. What warrants a reading of this passage as keenly aware of political issues is also the enumeration contained in the first sentence of this quote. Four of the eight elements included in the enumeration are overtly germane to questions of the interdependence of politics and economy, namely "social life, poverty, labor," and also "fortune" read both a luck and, more pertinently, as great amounts of financial means. The latter three elements lay the focus of material conditions on those produced with a distinctly social and socio-politically organized sphere, to which the first element of "social life" also points. In the context of a tract that draws a lot of its aesthetic appeal and discursive impact from the description of landscapes and natural phenomena, such a strategy of defining matter and "world" in terms of economy and politics and the human being's experience thereof is not at all an aspect to be overlooked. Much rather, this enumeration thereby lends itself to a reading mindful of political messages and statements thereby implied. While less overtly so, the other elements constituting the enumeration also carry vital political meaning that further interacts with the sphere of the economic. The gender denominations of "man" and "woman" are distinct political categories defined by clearly stipulated positions with regard to their position to and exercise of political power. Especially with regard to Emerson's own privileging of the category of "man" in his outline of the prescriptive traits of the citizen, as explained below, these elements hardly appear random or apolitical within the enumeration at hand.

A reading as aligned with hegemonic narratives seems further substantiated by the fact that the enumeration seems to arrange the elements in a climatic order from "poverty" to "fortune," implying that the trajectory from economic destitution to affluence entails a cycle of work and regeneration with the concomitant worry regarding one's progress.

Evidently, such an arrangement echoes and reproduces hegemonic narratives of social mobility and its individual attainability.

Nonetheless, Emerson's activation of hegemonic vocabularies also explicates the coercive potential inherent in the very narratives of social mobility that seem to stabilize the status quo. The least overtly politically charged elements are "sleep" and "fear," which are, however, still germane to a discussion of the individual's location in political and economic systems. The fact that the enumeration arranges "sleep" to immediately follow "labor" makes its reading as a practice of discipline useful for the reproduction of "labor" in the context of capitalist, and other, production processes plausible. Rather than as a process fundamentally determining and enabling the physiological survival, "sleep" is presented to follow and to be included into the production process, whose logic binds it together with "poverty" and "labor" into one paradigm. In that regard, even "sleep" seems to be imbued with a potentially political meaning by virtue of its presentation as intricately linked with economic processes. In a particularly critical and perceptive key, Emerson adds "fear" to the paradigm of political and economic terms. The perception and induction of "fear" are coercive processes by which social, political, and economic control can be fortified (cf. Burawoy 603; also cf. Kavka, Robin). This factor is thus useful and central to the reproduction of the status quo and social stabilization. Further, the incorporation of the negatively marked element of "fear" into the enumeration fortifies the effect that its entirety is bound to produce on the reader by virtue of its reference to coercive and disciplinarian socioeconomic structures.

Taking into account the connection between the individual mind and spirit with the divine postulated by Emerson, the words of the Orphic poet that begin the closing segment of *Nature* are of special interest in analyzing the normative conception of social mobility in Emerson's outline of an idealized society. The Orphic poet begins his closing remarks thusly:

> Nature is not fixed but fluid. Spirit alters, moulds, makes it. The immobility or bruteness of nature, is the absence of spirit; to pure spirit, it is fluid, it is volatile, it is obedient. Every spirit builds itself a house; and beyond its house a world; and beyond its world, a heaven. Know then, that the world exists for you. (Emerson 48)

This passage establishes a direct connection between the malleability of material circumstances or "nature" and the faculty to exercise power, or "spirit." What particularly fosters the impression of an intended equation of "nature" with mundane material conditions is the lack of a capitalization in spelling. Rendering "nature" with a capital initial letter is a strategy for which Emerson is well known and which he employs to express both, the importance that this particular concept has in the context of his disquisition and the relation it bears to the divine according to his conception of the immanence of God in the natural world.

By this logic, the lack of capitalization implies that, in this instance, it is not nature as an expression of the divine and thus an important aspect in the quasi-theological theory that is meant. A similar logic of a lack of capitalization applies to the noun "spirit," which is often written with a capital initial letter by Emerson to show its close relation to the divine in Emerson's thought. Rather than the overarching terms for different expressions of the divine appearing with capitalized initial letters, Emerson refers to particular, individual phenomena further removed from their absolute, totalizing hypostases. Hence, "nature" is set to refer to particular material conditions, rather than to the whole of the natural world as a manifestation of the divine itself. It is this capacity to interact with and represent divine power that renders "nature" malleable under its influence.

Since divine power has, as shown, a thoroughly political connotation in the context of *Nature*, this passage seems to intimate that it is the individual assumption and exercise of political power that can effectuate a change in material conditions that would otherwise be immutable. This establishment of conceptual connections points to two factors determining the normative social outline proposed in *Nature*: Firstly, the material conditions of this society are fundamentally subject to possible change and thereby highly mutable. This points to a high degree of both upward and downward social mobility, as the material assets determining social positions is not rigidly fixed. This indicates that both the social and the political status quo with the concomitant relations and imbalances of power are highly volatile and mutable, implying the presence of a high degree of political contention. The presence of a high degree of political contention is also the second factor fundamentally determining the normative construction of society and also of the citizen. Without the conscious exercise of power by the citizen, this said mutability of material conditions is not to be achieved. An awareness of this causality is one of the main characteristics of the

normative citizen. Again, this awareness echoes individualist narratives: As it is the individual capability of every citizen to exercise and assume political power that renders social mobility and the volatility of the status quo a reality, the responsibility to sense an agreeable position with regard to material conditions is placed within the individual.

Another fact regarding the conception of an ideal, normative society is that volatility and mobility are valued as positive features that enhance the structure politically. This evaluation that permeates all of *Nature* and that highly privileges mobility is by no means self-evident and undisputable. While mobility and mutability are indeed regarded to constitute key characteristics of democratic societies, they are also associated with general instability and insecurity, factors that can render living in such a system disconcerting and difficult. The valorization of mutability once again resonates with hegemonic nation-building narratives of the USA that highlight mobility in all of its forms as determining national society, economy, and politics. The hegemonic notion of the USA as a classless society finds itself represented in such a stark focus on social, political, and economic mutability, as does the dichotomy of the USA vs. Europe, in which the latter is constructed to be fully determined by ossified and immutable sociopolitical structures in which hereditary social, political, and economic status cannot be overcome by the individual.

What further supports the reading of "spirit" as pertaining to very particularized, individual faculties of single human beings is the statement that "[e]very spirit builds itself a house" (Emerson 48). The noun describing the space created by a "spirit" strongly evokes the semantic field of personal living arrangements. Correspondingly, the phrase of "builds [itself] a house" is first and foremost applicable to an individual human being's activity of creating shelter for oneself. In this manner, the placement of the religious/theological term of "spirit" into a metaphorical construction that so strongly relies on the vehicle of a fundamentally human activity in the context of the society in which this figure of speech was produced forcefully equates "spirit" with an individual's feature or faculty. It is the climatic progression from "house" to "world" and finally to "heaven" that eventually binds the term pertaining to the semantic field of individual/personal accommodation back to a theological semantic field. This process of referring the secular back to the religious does not, however, happen before the last element in this climatic enumeration is named: While the noun "heaven" has an unmistakably theological connotation that eclipses all of its other semantic aspects, the noun "world" does not. Rather than a distinctly religious or theological meaning,

the term “world” is conspicuously general, referring potentially to both the individual’s immediate environs and to the larger context, political, social, economic, natural, into which the individual is implicated. Thus, the next sentence in which the poet admonishes the reader to “[k]now then, that the world exists for you” shifts the attention to the middle and most general element of the climatic enumeration. Rather than the distinctly personal, individual, and mundane like the “house” or than the expressly unknowable and transcendent like “heaven,” it is the general and polyvalent “world” that receives attention.

The location of “world” between “house” and “heaven,” between the individual and the absolute whose flanking function is reinforced by their common initial sound, could once again point to its social and political aspect in this context. the climatic progression would then imply that the individual is the measure of overarching social and political structures in such an ideal system, as the individual not only “builds” or generates these structures him- or herself, but also generates them on the basis of the closest surroundings of the “house,” which again he or she is postulated to have brought into existence him- or herself.

Also, the term “heaven” deserves further analysis as the last element and by that token the climax of the enumeration in question. As the only term in the progression overtly connected with the realm of the divine, “heaven” connotes more in the specific textual context of Nature than merely a transcendent sphere as the final destination of immortal souls. As the realm of the “Spirit,” or of the divine that is not manifest in observable nature, “heaven” is also the evolution of “world,” and similar to “world,” is said to be generated by the individual “spirit.” This allows for a reading of “heaven” as a metaphorical rendition of the ideal society, one that functions in accordance with the spiritual laws manifest in nature and meant by the divine to instruct human kind in that very endeavor of building societies and arranging their relations in the sphere of the political.

To summarize, both Paine and Emerson give the rhizomatically panoptic haze the material expression of movement of, and within a system of, multifarious and heterogeneous elements. While Paine transfers his Deist postulation regarding the didactic character of planetary movement onto the interactions and relations between such heterogeneous groups, Emerson remains rather more critical with regard to the benefits that such contention might offer. And while Paine cautions his readers of the adverse effects representative structures can have on the equity of the distribution of wealth, Emerson insists on every individual’s own influence on personal material conditions. Furthermore,

Emerson remains attached to a nearly Foucauldian notion of the gaze in its material impact, which further distinguishes him from Paine's transposition of the principles of rhizomatic panopticism into a material sociopolitical environment. The next chapter continues a further analysis of the importance of different aspects of the gaze exercised by the human being when it comes to constructing the prescriptive characteristics of a normative citizen.

9. The Normative Citizen

This chapter analyzes Paine's and Emerson's respective constructions of the normative citizen. Both authors, I postulate, engage representations of specific aspects of the rhizomatically panoptic gaze in order to undertake such constructions. In the first section, I examine how Paine and Emerson construct the integrating gaze as a normative characteristic of the citizen, while in the second section I turn to the role that the scientifically informed gaze plays in constructing the characteristics of the normative citizen. In both tracts, I suggest, the human being's visual perception is not limited to the contact with the natural environment, but extends to the reading of texts. Therefore, I analyze the role of the citizen as the recipient of socially relevant, hegemonic texts in the third section. On the basis of these insights, I turn to the construction of the normative citizen's body and its features. In this context, I propose in the fourth section that the utilization of the line of flight of vision allows both authors to construct the citizen's body as a body without organs constituting itself on the basis of the desire to engage in visual perception. At the same time, the body remains clearly marked as male, white, and able, as I go on to point out the last section of this chapter.

The Citizen as Integrating Observer

Both Paine and Emerson ascribe chief importance to the processes and modes of visual perception when it comes to delineating the normative, preferred interaction of the individual with his environs. The perception of the multiplicity of elements contained in the natural sphere as a harmonious whole, which however manages not to override the very distinctness of the singular elements contained, is one defining, prescriptive feature of the kind of perception with which Paine and Emerson vest their respective normative citizens. In

both texts, the awareness of multicentric environments asserts itself as a key characteristic of the idealized mode of perception. In Paine's case, the construction of the imperative to assume a mode of perception that regards the environment as fundamentally multi-central and thereby defying attempts of singular entities to claim power over its entirety asserts itself through the construction of an oppositional stance to church doctrine and Christian dogma. Engaging in yet another refutation of the Bible's claim to a central and overruling position when it comes to regulating the human being's perception of the divine, Paine refers the reader to the observation of the natural sphere and states:

> When we contemplate the immensity of that Being, who directs and governs the incomprehensible WHOLE, of which the utmost ken of human sight can discover but a part, we ought to feel shame at calling such paltry stories the word of God. (Paine, *The Age* 676)

This passage shows once again that Paine conceives of the godhead as itself a multiplicity that incorporates the entirety of phenomena found the natural world. As said, this textual instance operates on the basis of its opposition to the doctrines and therefore also to the constructions of the godhead put forward by Christianity. One of the major points of opposition which Paine utilizes in this instance in order to promote the imperative of the gaze that is aware of multiplicity is the refusal to anthropomorphize the godhead beyond the ascription of the agencies of "direct[ing]" and "govern[ing]." Referring to the deity as "that Being," Paine does not vest the deity with human attributes and, in fact, positions the incapability of the human being to perceive adequately what the deity "directs and governs" as a stark contrast to divine power and essence. The fact that Paine represents the deity through the rather non-distinct and diffuse noun of "Being," whose capitalization is used to refer to the divine and which is suggestive of the experience of existence rather than of a bodily materiality, negates the very specific Christian doctrine of the Trinity. The Trinitarian manner of representing the godhead, as explained above, relies chiefly on the principle of anthropomorphization and personification and renders the deity in various human shapes. Paine's words in this passage, however, intimate that the deity is only to be experienced in a metonymic way through the interaction with and perception of the natural world, which the

deity created. Hence, one only can experience the divine as a multiplicity constituted by the entirety of phenomena and objects found in the natural world.

In that manner, Paine endeavors to cast doubt on the legitimacy of a doctrinaire reduction of the experience of the deity to a human scale and shape, involving the worshipping of essentially humanized divine representations such the "Father" or the "Son" as well as of very circumscribed material objects such as sacred texts and, finally, of the "pecuniary" (Paine, *The Age* 684) logic of sacrifice. Paine evaluates religious human beings and communities engaging in such worship as incapable of recognizing the astonishing character of the natural world in the manner in which they encounter it on a daily basis. To quote the rhetorical question that Paine poses as part of his criticism of this very incapability: "But if objects of gratitude and admiration are our desire, do they not present themselves every hour to our eyes?" (Paine, *The Age* 674). The series of rhetorical questions introduced by the quoted one all express Paine's evaluation of the worship and general privileging of religious narratives and traditions over the regard for existing natural conditions as a callous and self-important practice that unduly extols the human being while belittling the importance of every other natural phenomenon. In contrast to what Paine refers to as "manism" elsewhere (cf. Paine, *The Age* 690), he endeavors to refocus the reader's attention on the vastness of the natural sphere by reporting the emotions of facing the sublime and the incomprehensible when observing it carefully. And in contrast to the personification that religious narratives offer as conceptualizations of the divine, Paine identifies the godhead with that very vastness of the natural sphere; this identification further aids the unmasking of religious "manism" (Paine, *The Age* 690): While the personification juxtaposes, on a formal level, the human being with the deity, Paine's insistence on a diffuse deity expressed in all of nature dwarfs the human being and, as observed previously, potentially negates total human comprehension.

Here, it is important to keep in mind that the said refutation of the legitimacy of referring to the human being as a model for the comprehension of the divine has very clear political implications at Paine's time of writing. This grows the clearer when considering the chief metaphor employed by Thomas Hobbes in his seminal *Leviathan* of 1651 to provide a model for the comprehension of the organization of a state or a polity. While Paine's tract was published nearly one and a half century after Hobbes's dissertation, Hobbes's influence on political thought as well as the metaphors that he propagated still had considerable

currency during the latter part of the 18th century, with Hobbes's influence on Utilitarian philosophers such as Jeremy Bentham being especially well analyzed (cf. Crimmins 578). The introduction to this seminal political tract states that

> by Art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMONWEALTH, or STATE, (in latine CIVITAS) which is but an Artificiall Man; though of greater stature and strength than the Naturall, for whose protection and defence it was intended; and in which, the *Soveraignty* is an Artificiall *Soul*, as giving life and motion to the whole body; The *Magistrates*, and other *Officers* of Judicature and Execution, artificiall *Joynts*; *Reward* and *Punishment* (by which fastned to the seate of the Soveraignty, every joynt and member is moved to performe his duty) are the *Nerves*, that do the same in the Body Naturall; The *Wealth* and *Riches* of all the particular members, are the *Strength*; *Salus Populi* (the *peoples safety*) its *Businesse*; *Counsellors*, by whom all things needfull for it to know, are suggested unto it, are the *Memory*; *Equity* and *Lawes*, an artificiall *Reason* and *Will*; *Concord*, *Health*; *Sedition*, *Sicknesse*; and *Civill war*, *Death*. Lastly, the *Pacts* and *Covenants*, by which the parts of this Body Politique were at first made, set together, and united, resemble that *Fiat*, or the *Let us make man*, pronounced by God in the Creation. (Hobbes 12, 14; emphases in the original)

Hobbes sets out by providing a metaphor that explains all major components of a state and a polity in terms of body parts or physical processes and thereby equates the two different spheres of the political and the physically human. According to Robert E. Stillman, this construction of "reasoned analogies between the Leviathan's body and the body politic" forms the first step by way of which he "harnesses our universal fear of death into a rational awareness of the death that all must suffer in Leviathan's absence," thereby providing "most potent arguments for the establishment of an authoritarian state" (799). Reading Paine's refusal to translate the divine into the physically human against Hobbes's penchant for personification can further convince one in Paine's rather more democratic credentials. Paine identifies the church's insistence on personification and "manism" as a mechanism that allows it to transfer the respect and authority reserved for the divine onto itself and thereby claim considerable power. The basis for this transference is the construction of a structural likeness between the divine and the human being, which facilitates a more readily

exhibited acceptance for the human to assume the said respect and authority, which then translates into immense political, social, and economic power. Regarding the fact that Hobbes's *Leviathan* is often read as a defense of absolutism and monarchical rule, although modern-day scholars like to qualify this received notion (cf. Owen 131, Curran 516), one can read Hobbes's reliance on anthropomorphization as a similar mechanism, which aides the identification of the human being, and later on of one particular human being, namely the monarch, with considerable power. In this instance, Foucault's and Hesse's abovementioned analyses of the identification of the body of the monarch with that of the state and the concomitant dissolution of that analogy during a transition to democracy come to mind, once again.

To defy that scaling of more abstract or complex process such as state or polity organization to human size and form can also mean to defy the preparation of a centralization of power in one human being or one small institution, for example in the monarch, in the church, or in the president or presidency. Paine's insistence on a diffuse godhead expressed materially through the multiplicity of phenomena and objects found in the natural world as well as on a kind of perception that bears justice to that multiplicity does not leave conceptual space for a single human being's investment with such power. The likewise implicit negation of the practice of conceiving of the society which one inhabits as an equivalent of one's own body and to focus on its multiplicity instead can be interpreted as the calling for what Stephan Günzel in his reception of Deleuze would describe as a technique of decreasing of the firmness of one's own subject position[4] based on the perception of a unity of bodily features and its concomitant questioning (cf. 28, 29). Günzel's formulation is based on the Deleuzian conception of the human body as a site in which social meanings are inscribed, produced, and negotiated (29)[5]. Against the background of the discourse of the state itself as analogous to the body, as mentioned most often to the body of the monarch as sovereign, Paine's insistence on a dispersed deity and a democratically dispersed sovereign seems to imply a challenging of the alleged solid unity of the human body, as well. The fact that an idealized human body, as an object of description, is conspicuously missing from the tract, being only implicitly present by the vestige of the idealized representation of the gaze, seems to redound to a superposition of conventional

[4] The German compound noun employed in this instance reads "Entsubjektivierungsstrategie" (Günzel 28).
[5] As Günzel formulates, "[d]er Körper ist gleichsam die Einschreibungsoberfläche gesellschaftlicher Signifikanzen" (Günzel 29).

bodily unity or coherence by the body's more discreet functions. As described in the preceding chapters, instances in which Paine features invocations of strong, unified physical presences are those in which these presences can be attributed to specific Biblical figures and their physical processes, such as the conception by Mary or the crucifixion of Jesus. These, however, are represented as the arbitrary bases of narratives justifying and perpetuating undemocratic power relations. Rather than a feature of the modern human being in his role as citizen, bodily particularity and coherence is presented as a feature of the past associated with arbitrary, undemocratic rule. Thus, presumed unity can give way to multiplicity in regarding both, the body and the society inhabited. This emphasis on the perception of multiplicity, in society and in oneself, thus prevents the individual qua normative citizen from accepting claims to power issued by singular institutions or individuals.

Returning to the landscape description quoted in the previously chapter, one can find a similar insistence on the body's multiplicity in Emerson. The ability of the poet to understand the principles of multiplicity and connection as underlying nature rests on the representation of his own body as defying the notion of a unified, bodily whole. While the farmers, who lack the said understanding of multiplicity and in contrast to whom the poet is constructed, are epitomized by their respective exemplary, singular names and generically referred to as "men," the poet's description is not dominated by the same kind of assertion of singular integrity. Much rather, his body is hinted to be a collection of individual components, as one of these, namely the "eye," is granted most importance in this passage. The poet's body is thus shown to be a site of multiplicity, comprehending several organs, similar to "the landscape" observed, which "is made up of some twenty or thirty farms." The correspondence thus invoked between the structure of the scenery and the bodily structure of the poet hint to an interrelation of the two that exceeds one-directional conceptions of possession as proposed by the scholars quoted above. As the multiplicity of the poet is characterized by structural similarity to that of the "property in the horizon," and since that structural similarity is the condition upon which the poet can acquire understanding and possessive power over that "property," possession can be read to motivate a process of becoming.

A privileging of the awareness of the multiplicity and its relation to the entirety of which it is a part also features prominently in Emerson's descriptions of the idealized kind of

individual. Again, this experience of the idealized perception is actualized in the practice of the observation of the individual's environment. While Paine's environment is of a chiefly, although not exclusively astronomical nature, Emerson chooses a more immediate topography to explain the kind of perception he considers to be of an ideal character. In the first chapter of *Nature*, the narrator marks the poet as the "implied protagonist" (Branch 222) and designates him as the example of and individual practicing ideal perception. His ideal perception engenders a specific understanding of possession that constitutes his difference from the ordinary individual. The narrator writes:

> The charming landscape which I saw this morning, is indubitably made up of some twenty or thirty farms. Miller owns this field, Locke that, and Manning the woodland beyond. But none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet. This is the best part of these men's farms, yet to this their warranty-deeds give no title. (Emerson 9)

In this instance, the narrator discerns that the farmers and landowners, as representatives of the ordinary individual mentioned above, define possession in a physical and, thus, a materially limited way; the poet, on the other hand, defines possession through perception, wherefore his awareness of and felt entitlement to his surroundings is essentially limitless and not primarily assigned to those objects he legally calls his own. Therefore, a glorification of the act of taking possession through perception is generally ascribed to this passage. In this depiction Emerson also diverges from Paine, whose discourse of vision is not linked with vocabularies of possession. Neal Dolan, rooted in a tradition of reading the work of Emerson as deeply impacted by the Enlightenment and "decisively influenced by Locke and the theorists of the eighteenth century" (McWilliams 44), construes the seemingly arbitrarily chosen farmer's name of "Locke" as an allusion to the "philosophical foundation of modern liberalism" (Property in Being" 356). John Locke's definition of the human being of any social association as, essentially, a proprietor is, according to Dolan, exemplified by the poet. Hence, Dolan goes on to argue, the "more abstract, less instrumental conception" of possession presented in this passage is not meant to contest any notion of a "normative liberal idea," but to render it more complete (ibid.). According to the New Americanists,

Johannes Voelz points out, this abstracted representation of possession through perception ties back to a concrete, expansionist incorporation of lands violently seized (182). These readings cogently contribute to a body of critical work that, as Buell formulates it, insists on "Transcendentalist (especially Emersonian) condonement if not outright advocacy of U. S. Manifest Destiny" ("Manifest Destiny" 185). These interpretations, however, also rest on the assumption of an immediate, direct equivalence of perception and possession in *Nature*, as well as on a denotative understanding of possession as a material claim of ownership. The passage in question, however, implies that possession is the effect of a particular kind of perception rather than perception itself. This idealized perception facilitates the understanding of certain principles, which then endow the understanding individual with a specific power over the perceived whose expression is verbalized utilizing the vocabularies of possession.

In the passage discussed, the understanding of the principle of multiplicity is most strikingly put forward as a condition for power and possession. The poet as the comprehending individual is distinguished from the farmers and landowners on account of his specific view of the scenery into which all of them are equally embedded; in other words, the distinction actualized through a differentiation of their respective modes of perception: The farmers and landowners conceive of their tenures as unified, singular spaces, to which the singular deictic pronouns "this" and "that" in their function as designators of particular objects point; the poet, on the other hand, is able to grasp the multiplicity and internal cohesiveness of the scenery, which is referenced in its unity by the use of the noun "property," which conveys an impression of coalescence among the singular, individual parts that it designates. By virtue of what Michael P. Branch terms "radically integrative new acts of perception and imagination" (222), the poet is able to interpret the said "landscape" – again a noun that points rather to the array itself than to its individual components – as a site of multiplicity, in which the importance of singular objects is superseded by the significance of their variety and relational composition: Only the poet's "eye can integrate all the parts" and thus understand the scenery as a "unity that applies only to the multiple" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 184). At the same time, only the abandonment of a notion of possession, and thus power, that is directed at singular, unified objects facilitates the recognition of power over an exceptional kind of "property," namely over the multiplicity itself. Claiming that this "property" is "the best part of these men's farms," the narrator challenges, by

means of a partitive genitive, even the conception of the singular “farm” as a unified object of possession, suggesting instead that it consists of multiplicities itself. Since, however, the power of ownership is defined as dependent upon the understanding of multiplicity, the farmers’ power over these farms, which they perceive as singular, is constructed as an erroneous belief. Hence, it is the poet whose conception of possession exceeds material ownership and who exemplifies that, in *Nature*, “the perception of matter is shown to be only the first stage of perception, but crucial in the development of the individual’s capacity to establish a relation with the order of things” (Robinson 190). This “order of things” revealed to the poet by his distinctive mode of perception is thus constructed to be governed by the principle of multiplicity, thus a principle of the rhizome.

Secondly, it must be noted that the centrality of the gaze to the proposed notion of perception suggests the principle of connection as underlying the exercise of power through possession. Conceiving of the scenery as a unified multiplicity is dependent upon the poet’s ability to create connections between the “twenty or thirty farms” that would otherwise stand in their singularity as emphasized by the numerals. The poet’s “eye” is named as the instrument with which he can “integrate all the parts,” that is to say, construct through visual perception the connection that allows superseding the singularity of the eventual components of a larger multiplicity, without, however, obliterating it. In other words, the gaze’s exercise effectuates an establishment of connection that on its part gives rise to a “differential, intensive field of singularities” that “are determinate as well as relational” (Colucciello Barber 53, 54). Through the exercise of the gaze, the poet thus establishes what Brent Adkins and Paul R. Hinlicky describe as characteristic of the rhizome, namely a “temporary connection of heterogeneous elements that can combine with other heterogeneous elements” (73). To reiterate it can be said that since the “eye” is directly expressed to be an instrument of “integration,” the gaze should, in the first step of interpretation, be considered a function of fostering connection and contact between the perceived objects.

The Citizen as Scientific Observer

With the exception of Emerson's emphasis on possession, the two authors seem to have a great ground of commonality when it comes to the construction of an individual engaging in

visual perception that negotiates between the multiplicity and the entirety which it constitutes. They do, however, diverge considerably when it comes to the representation of more scientific forms of observation. In the context of Emerson's imperative to a gaze of "integration," Emerson's specific detraction from the practice of scientific observation, acclaimed by Paine, seems consistent with his apparent aversion to a focus on singular particularities devoid of a contextualization. In the last chapter of *Nature* called "Prospects," Emerson presents a view on what can generally be called the scientific method that quite diverges from Paine's very positive opinion thereof. As shown, Paine conceptualizes empirical science as the best method to ascertain material and natural facts, thereby arriving at trustworthy conclusions regarding the provisions and the character of the divine Creator. By this token, science in general and the scientific experiment in particular present a possibility for every individual to establish an immediate relationship with the realm of the divine through the observation of the material sphere and through the checking of claims made by others regarding the character of both. Since such claims concerning both, natural facts and the realm of the divine are often the basis for claims to political power, Paine intimates that the possibility to check those claims is likewise a possibility to assess and, if need be, to challenge those claims. As Larkin so fittingly puts it, "[g]iven that Paine saw unlimited power as the ultimate source of injustice and evil, we may conclude that he believed it was man's duty to learn from nature such that we might check the Deity's power, lest he too become a tyrant" (145). Science and the scientific experiment, especially one based on visual perception, is therefore of utmost importance to Paine when it comes to ascertaining material and spiritual truth as well as establishing a just distribution of access to power among the individuals that form a society. *The Age of Reason* in its argumentative entirety can be understood as a documentation of applying and explicating the practice of scientific observation in order to refute Christian doctrine. To better understand the facets of the reliance on scientific observation, it is convenient to consider a passage in which Paine seems to contradict the tenets that he himself implicitly postulated as defining his inquiry and positioning it against Christian religious discourses; more precisely, Paine employs the aforementioned personification of the "Almighty lecturer" in this passage and even renders the lecturer's message to human kind in words by means of constructing an instance of direct speech:

> The Almighty lecturer, by displaying the principles of science in the structure of the universe, has invited man to study and to imitation. It is as if he had said to the inhabitants of this globe that we call ours, "I have made an earth for man to dwell upon, and I have rendered the starry heavens visible, to teach him science and the arts. He can now provide for his own comfort, AND LEARN FROM MY MUNIFICENCE TO ALL, TO BE KIND TO EACH OTHER." (Paine, *The Age* 694; emphasis in the original)

It is of particular interest that Paine still translates the vision given by the deity in form of the "starry heavens" into language when he relates in direct speech the message that humans must infer from the sight of particular natural phenomena. With regard to Paine's privileging of sight over speech, the strategy chosen here seems like a contradiction, as it uses language to mediate the message of the divine expression of the natural phenomenon, which is to stand as a model for human thought and for which thus authority is claimed. This fact seems like a concession, explicating the usefulness of language and the mediation of ideas that it renders possible, if not for the principle of representation as a whole. Especially the fact that Paine purports to infer the words of the divine authority shades of the very practice of reporting "revelation" that he criticizes himself. Certainly, this passage of reported direct speech can therefore be read as a fault line in Paine's argument, one that points to the contradiction inherent in the juxtaposition of the two human faculties of vision and speech, of which the latter is socially privileged as the means of choice when it comes to communicating. As verbal communication is based on the principle of representation, along arbitrary lines of relation between referent and signifier at that, it is the lack of immediacy that socially sanctioned, conventionally accepted communication is built upon and what it reinforces.

Yet Paine is mediating verbally between the recipient and a phenomenon still potentially visible to the recipient. Therefore, it is valid to maintain that he is offering an interpretation rather than a doctrine, and that his practice is therefore not fully congruent with the reporting of revelation that he criticizes. He is offering an interpretation that recipients can object to after beholding the phenomenon in question themselves. Therefore, this passage can also be read as invitation, an implicit encouragement to engage in the unmediated perception of the nightly sky by means of vision, stepping into the debate on the basis of personal experience. It is possible that this fault line, by its practical

contradiction to the rest of the argument, in fact reinforces the very same argument, by indirectly inciting the reader to engage in vision in order to either coincide with or to contradict the author in this instance. Thus, the implicit imperative patent in this passage is for the individual to engage in that very scientific kind of observation that aims at the ability to either verify or falsify claims, of both, a scientific and a metaphysical character.

In the context of this very favorable view of science as an empowering practice, Emerson's formulation in the first paragraph of "Prospects" seems interestingly contradicting Paine's views:

> Empirical science is apt to cloud the sight, and, by the very knowledge of functions and processes, to bereave the student of the manly contemplation of the whole. The savant becomes unpoetic. But the best read naturalist who lends an entire and devout attention to truth, will see that there remains much to learn of his relation to the world, and that it is not to be learned by any addition or subtraction or other comparison of known quantities, bur is arrived at by untaught sallies of the spirit, by a continual self-recovery, and by entire humility. (Emerson 43)

The noteworthy feature of this passage is the dichotomy that Emerson erects when it comes to defining the gaze of "integration" against "[e]mpirical science," suggesting that both are not to be harmonized with each other. The very feature that Paine claimed to be at the center of the scientific experiment, namely the encouragement and establishment of direct visual perception, Emerson negates by stating that "[e]mpirical science" would "cloud the sight" rather than facilitate it or emphasize its importance.

Diverging further from Paine's thought, Emerson presents the "knowledge" presumably resulting from "[e]mpirical science" to be a hindrance to the "manly contemplation of the whole." This formulation gives away two important points about Emerson's conception of vision and about the observer therein engaged. The first of these points touches upon the already mentioned privileging of the recognition of the whole and of multiplicity over the recognition of details and singular elements. The second point refers to the gendered conception of the process of observing natural phenomena in their entirety. The adjective "manly" clearly qualifies the act of the "contemplation of the whole" as a laudable practice attributed to men. The presence of this adjective extends its meaning

further than the noun it immediately qualifies. When Emerson goes on to describe the ideal attitude of the "naturalist" as one that is mindful of the unity of multiplicity and his own implication therein, it becomes quite clear that the norm constructed by Emerson in this instance is male rather than female, as the act that constitutes this ideal naturalist's status as the norm is precisely the engagement on the "manly contemplation of the whole."

The fact that the poet as the normative construction of the citizen in Emerson and the "naturalist" are related figures is hinted to by the sentence "[t]he savant becomes unpoetic" (Emerson 43). The "savant" however, can become, as it were, "poetic," if he "lends and entire and devout attention to truth" and if he thereupon comes to the conclusion "that there remains much to learn of his relation to the world" (ibid.), or thus far this passage's implication seems to go. In other words, the poet seems to be an evolution of the naturalist. In that vein, Emerson states the inferiority of science to poetry once again, maintaining that science was, in contrast to poetry, not facilitating a profound understanding of nature and the individual's position and interactions therein.

> The perception of this class of truths makes the attraction which draws men to science, but the end is lost sight of in attention to the means. In view of this half-sight of science, we accept the sentence of Plato, that, 'poetry comes nearer to vital truth than history.'" (Emerson 45)

Emerson attributes "the attraction that draws men to science" to the recognition of and interest in the presence of the human being in the natural world and vice versa, or as Emerson puts it earlier, in the "wonderful congruity which subsists between man and the world" (Emerson 44). Again, however, Emerson accuses science of inhibiting vision on account of its attention to details, especially to the details of the acquisition of factual knowledge. When Emerson alleges that "the end is lost sight of in attention to the means," it is again the "empirical science" bend on deriving and formulating principles and rules that receives criticism for its apparent lack of interest in the aforementioned Universalist conviction of the "wonderful congruity" between the human being and the natural world.

Continuing on the basis of his premise that true vision is first and foremost a vision of the entirety of elements in the natural world rather than a visual recognition of individual elements, Emerson refers to the "half-sight of science" (Emerson 45), preparing the further

progression of his attention to science's presumed opposite, namely poetry. Emerson goes on to involve the authority of the ancient Greek philosopher whose proposition regarding timeless ideals expressing themselves as material objects serves as the fundamental premise for much of Emerson's own idealism. Plato is quoted as saying that "poetry come nearer to vital truth than history" (Emerson 45). This statement seems to be somewhat out of context regarding the previous focus on science stressed by Emerson for the construction of his binary opposition at whose other end and opposite from "science" the concept of "poetry" is supposed to be located. This focus, however, is now shifted from "science" to "history" as at the opposite end of "poetry." With this shift in focus, Emerson achieves to tie back the argument of this final chapter of "Prospects" to the very first paragraph of his tract. In the "Introduction" to Nature, Emerson presents the principle of the concept of "history" as a hindrance when it comes to developing a worldview rooted in the present, or in a present appreciation of one's actual surroundings. "History" was thus established as that concept and mind-set which needed to be overcome, on account of its apparent irreconcilability with the development of an "original relation with the universe" (Emerson 7). By placing "history" at the opposite end of "poetry," a position that, as mentioned, is also occupied by "science" just one sentence earlier, Emerson equates both "science" and "history" in their opposition to what he poses as the ideal concept and method, namely "poetry." To recapitulate, this said shift of focus seems to postulate an analogy between the concepts and methods of "science" and "history." This analogy seems to entail, first and foremost, that neither science nor history enable the individual to entertain an immediate relationship with the environment, as neither science nor history facilitate a direct and correct vision of one's environs, meaning a vision that is perceptive of both, the individual elements and the entirety that these details constitute, however decidedly privileges the entirety as it recognizes that the entirety is contained in the individual elements and the individual elements in the entirety.

To Paine, science and scientific observation does not engage in "half-sight" but much rather enables the individual engaged in it to perceive the complex relationship between the multiplicity and the entirety. It is observation together with stereotypically scientific deductive thought and calculation that allows Paine to deconstruct narratives insisting on the singularity and centrality of human existence propagated by Christian churches, thus calibrating and formulating his own world-view that is fundamentally determined by the

presupposition of a multiplicity of worlds and modes of existence. The following passage represents such an application of scientific thought against religious claims to singularity and for the acceptance of the principle of multiplicity:

> But, in the midst of those reflections, what are we to think of the christian [sic!] system of faith that forms itself upon the idea of only one world, and that of no greater extent, as is before shewn, than twenty five thousand miles. An extent, which a man walking at the rate of three miles an hour, for twelve hours in the day, could he keep on in a circular direction, would walk entirely round in less than two years. Alas! what is this to the mighty ocean of space, and the Almighty power of the Creator! (Paine, *The Age* 710)

Here, a representation of normative multiplicity is directly contrasted with the representation of space in the Christian religion. Paine starts this paragraph with an extensive rhetorical question, in which the main distinction of the Christian model is further described as at odds with any conception of the deity's greatness. The proposed uniqueness and limited space of the creation are presented as untrustworthy parameters, indicating that the entire system of belief that insists upon them is in itself untrustworthy, especially as it contradicts observable astronomical facts.

Hence, Paine begins this section with an interesting description of a thought process, namely "in the midst of those reflections." This seems to be a fitting turn of phrase in order to establish the connection between the preceding paragraph, which elucidated Paine's view of the cosmos as an "immense ocean of space" (Paine, *The Age* 710). The adverbial phrase "in the midst" seems to activate this very notion of the universe, and to place the reader who identifies with the author's elaborations into the multitude of, or into the "midst" of the "society of worlds" (Paine, *The Age* 710) so crucial to Paine's brand of Deism. To juxtapose this adverbial phrase with Paine's representation of the cosmos seems particularly justified as the planets and the stars, which constitute the said "society of worlds" in their entirety, are related with each other, among other factors, by means of light and its reflection: The multiple suns' emitted light is thrown back by their respective planets. This process renders the planets visible, and hence builds the ground upon which much of Paine's criticism of the Christian religion and, implicitly, of monarchist and tyrannical political regimes is built. In this

context, the phrase “in the midst of those reflections” acquires an ingenious ambiguity, as it can be seen as both, a metaphorical rendition of a thought process entailing evaluation, and as a topographical statement, localizing the author and the community of readers in the physical universe, which by virtue of its perceivable and verifiable nature compels the reader to accept a multiplicity of worlds. This ambiguity, accordingly, is not merely an instance of metaphorical ingenuity, but much rather a further elucidation of Paine’s insistence on a compelling connection between the material, the observable and the thought processes and abstractions entertained and developed by human beings, especially by human beings implicated into societies.

The contrast between the concept of multiplicity, arrived at by means of observation, and the “idea of only one world” (Paine, *The Age* 710) purported by “the christian system of faith” (ibid.) strikes the reader as even more blatant regarding the interaction of the abovementioned metaphoric expression for thought processes and the first mentioning of a verb denoting the entertainment of “reflections” directly: The author begins his rhetorical question, after the adverbial phrase, with “what are we to think” (Paine, *The Age* 710). The verb “to think” serves as the direct, denotational, unmistakably clear, and non-metaphoric continuation of the “reflections,” used to inquire with clarity and seriousness regarding an evaluation of Christianity. Since the said adverbial phrase is, as shown, ambiguous in meaning, the impending rhetorical question seems to inquire regarding the reconcilability of the physical “reflections” of the “society of worlds” or, to put differently, of the multitude of stars and planets, and the “christian system of faith.”

The Citizen as Recipient of Hegemonic Texts

Another differentiation has to be considered between Paine and Emerson’s outlines of idealized individuals as normative citizens when it comes to the manners of engaging culturally important texts and narratives as well as histories and textual traditions. Arguably, this feature forcefully determines all of the historical and national contexts engaged by the authors by virtue of their biographies and contexts of textual production. Whether it is the impact of religious texts or of legal ones, the reflection and negotiation of one’s own position relative to such documents forms a vital part of any citizen within a society that uses such texts to regulate its cultural, social, or legal and political organization. Paine and

Emerson construct different attitudes towards such dominant, hegemonic cultural narratives and texts, part of which can be referred back to their already analyzed differences when it comes to the evaluation of language as a representative system.

Paine's recognition of multiplicity as an important structuring factor of the natural sphere also extends to the sphere of human-made narratives. Challenging the claim to exclusivity and singularity formulated by the Bible, Paine reminds the reader that the creation of narratives that purport to explain the origin of the material world are not at all exclusive to the Judeo-Christian religious tradition. As Paine's strategy of refutation also features the discussion of whether the Biblical accounts officially ascribed to particular figures as their authors were actually written by the same, the following passage focuses specifically on the Mosaic account:

> The case is, that every nation of people has been world-makers, and the Israelites had as much right to set up the trade of world-making as any of the rest; and as Moses was not an Israelite, he might not chuse [sic!] to contradict the tradition. The account, however, is harmless; and this is more than can be said for many other parts of the Bible. (Paine, *The Age* 677)

Detracting from the Biblical claims to exclusivity and totalizing truth, Paine draws attention to the presence of a multiplicity of narratives that address the same issues and deal with the same topics as the Bible. He thereby dismantles the notion of the Bible's centrality and recognizes the presence of such narratives in "every nation of people." Again, he ties the specific nature of such narratives to particular "nations" and their contexts, once more emphasizing the contingent and not at all universal or general character of the narratives in question.

More precisely, Paine focuses on the narrative of creation and designates the process of inventing and propagating narratives pertaining to cosmogonies as "world-making." By calling the cultural and discursive tradition of such narratives "world-making," Paine uses signifiers that are evocative of very material processes and thereby seems to allude to a certain degree of permeability between the linguistic and the non-linguistic, physical reality as far as potential mutual impacts are concerned. In this instance, Paine seems to convey his awareness of the considerable extent to which revered cultural texts that are invested with a

sufficient degree of authority can impact and shape the material existence of the individuals of any society. This awareness is, of course, what chiefly motivates Paine's deconstruction of the centrality of the Bible, whose impact on the material existence of individuals living in societies whose cultural practices are informed by Christianity Paine does not hesitate to point out. Paine's attention to questions of dispensations and indulgences (*The Age* 684), the "pecuniary" logic exhibited by central Christian doctrines (ibid.), as well as his overall concern regarding power relations attest to that consideration of the interdependence between textual and non-textual, physical reality. In this manner, Paine's acknowledgement of the existence of a multiplicity of "world-making" instances does not merely reference a multitude of religious narratives describing the creation of the world, but also a multiplicity of differing material, national contexts or "worlds" brought about, at least in part, through the specificity of the "world-making" narratives in question. In other words, Paine's wording can be read to concede that multiplicity of texts can condition a multiplicity of material existences.

It needs to be noted that in spite of the criticism that Paine frequently voices concerning what he identifies as a religious centering on the human being, he nonetheless concedes, albeit in a potentially mocking manner, any group's "right to set up the trade of world-making as any of the rest" (Paine, *The Age* 677). A multiplicity of such "account[s]" is something Paine does not seem to oppose. The air of calmness with which Paine states this "right" for the Israelites in this instance, as well as the juxtaposition of a mundane and a sacred concept in "the trade of world-making" enhance the humorous tone of this passage. In part, this effect calibrates itself because this very opposition unmasks the creation of religious narratives as a "trade" or a mundane, routinely executed activity aiming at the extrication of profit. This contradiction, presented in a dispassionate and seemingly generous tone, ridicules the claims to exclusivity of truth expressed by the Christian religion further by presenting religious cosmogonies as, in fact, very mundane and routinely invented narratives, of which there is a multitude.

If read in a literal, denotational manner, the reference to "world-making" still inserts itself well into Paine's polemic style. This metaphoric expression that substitutes the production of narratives of cosmogonies with cosmogony as a process itself overstates the expressed idea and renders the formulation slightly hyperbolic and therefore humorous. The pompous self-importance which is thus implies to inform "every nation of people" as well as

"the Israelites" for engaging in the construction of such totalizing narratives finds itself exposed. The exaggeration implied in the denotational reading of the passage appears in tune with Paine's evaluation of religious human beings and communities as incapable of recognizing the astonishing character of the natural world in the manner in which they encounter it on a daily basis. All in all, Paine encourages in the individual qua normative citizen to consider hegemonic cultural narratives and, by extension, legal texts as products of specific historical and national contexts. He thereby questions any metaphysical claims to power with may emanate from either the texts or narratives in question or from the institutions that have been formed around them.

Paine sets the totalizing unity claimed by these narratives against the multiplicity of the actual presence of such narratives to question the authority claimed by every one of these narratives respectively, especially the authority claimed by the Bible as the main object of his criticism in the present tract. By drawing attention to the multiplicities of accounts, which he claims to be contingent on very specific national circumstances and exigencies, Paine can be read to eradicate the claim to transcendence any of the religious narratives claim. This feature is a fundamental characteristic of the metaphor of the rhizome in its function as an alternative to arborific structures and ways of thinking: As Patrick Hayden reformulates Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the rhizome,

> arboreal or vertical tree-like structures are found within the narrowly rationalist forms of Western epistemology and ontology which organize knowledge according to essentialized, centralized, internalized, polarized, and codified systems of representation that are held to reproduce or mirror a transcendent foundation. The rhizome, on the contrary, is a horizontal and immanent assemblage of external relations open to the productive continuum of the world, and is to be distinguished from the arboreal scheme […] (Hayden 94)

By virtue of the overlap with what Hayden identifies as the five main characteristics of the "systems of representation" one can easily distinguish the religious narratives in their national particularity to be such "arboreal" constructs; they are "essentialized" on account of their totalizing claim to truth, "centralized" on account of the institutional organizations that promulgate them, "internalized" as they come to forcefully inform individual behaviors

and perceptions of the world, "polarized" by virtue of their dichotomous structures, and "codified" in the respective sacred texts as "world-making" accounts which Paine decries in the quoted section. Most importantly, they claim a "transcendent foundation" in the shape of an inaccessible godhead who functions as the fountain of normative constraints and laws. By situating those "codified systems of representation" which Paine implies religious texts to be in distinctly national contexts and exposing the particular interests behind them, interest that shape the very words of the supposedly divinely inspired texts, he achieves to cast them alternatively as "assemblage[s] of external relations open to the productive continuum of the world."

This same strategy of pointing to the contingent and variegated rather than essential, transcendent, and unified character of the sacred texts Paine also employs when he speak of the Bible itself: Paine's aforementioned reproach that the initiators of the Christian church "decided by *vote* which of the books, out of collection they had made, should be the WORD OF GOD, and which should not" (*The Age* 675; emphases in the original) as well his subsequent deconstructions of the credibility of the Bible undertaken in the second part of the tract are not merely early instances of "the biblical scholarship which began to flourish in the nineteenth century" (Ayers 149). They are also, and by the token of this very explication of inconsistencies, a deconstruction of the alleged unity and transcendence on which the sacred text in question and the institutions behind it base their authority. It is thus the evidence that Paine privileges over the claim to transcendence, thereby negating religious authority to those who claim it on the basis of the very alleged inability of the human being to experience the transcendent directly (cf. Klinghardt 333).

Furthermore, the issue of historically justified privilege surfaces once again in Paine's elaboration on the hegemonic narrative of religious and by analogy legal texts. Since the claim to transcendence has been dismantled by Paine, the actual motive behind the legitimizing narratives can now be examined, which, as explained in the previous chapter, is that of assuring the monetary gain of the institutions behind the texts. As Georgina Green remarks in her analysis of the mechanisms of representation in Paine's work, this critical stance toward constitutions that are not codified in a physical and transparent manner was what aroused Paine's criticism, to which responses from the defenders of the historically established constitutions were prompted. Green points out that

> [t]he English constitution is largely naturalized by its antiquity; as Montaigne (a favourite of Burke's) puts it, 'not laws are in their true Credit, but such to which God has given so long a continuance, that no one knows their Beginning, or that there ever was any other'. The American War of Independence and the debates around its constitution that followed threatened the foundations of the political systems of the world because they brought those foundations into sharp focus. (Green 69)

Green provides this evaluation as a background yielding a better understanding of Paine's own experience as a legislator in France as well as of his overtly political writings. I propose to view this consideration regarding the character of constitutions as equally pertinent to Paine's discussion and criticism of the Bible. If it has become accepted in scholarship to evaluate Paine's attack on the church as connected to his disdain for the monarchy in the face of their historical affiliations (Claeys 185), I suggest to extend this impeding analogy to the Biblical text: Paine does not merely attack the Bible because such an attack further fortifies his case against organized religion in the shape of Christianity (cf. Larkin 137), but also because it represents a document with "a long continuance" that actively shapes societies to assume less democratic and less equitable structures. In other words, Paine deconstructs the Bible on account of its structural and functional similarity to certain kinds of constitutions that diminish the viability of democracy. The prescriptive trait of a normative citizen is not to accept justifications that base themselves on the said historic "continuance," but instead always to move, to once again borrow from Green, the constitutional "foundations into sharp focus."

Emerson's rather more lenient view on histories and traditions grows patent when he explicates poetry's merits in creating an immediate relationship with the natural world. In order to do so, Emerson proceeds by quoting the "Orphic poet" (Emerson 46), whose precise identity is not revealed, but who provides Emerson with claims as to the nature and origin of human kind and the material world that all fall within the definition of a mystical and spiritual philosophical Idealism. It is of some interest that Emerson starts the segment of the Orphic poet's quotes with the words

> I shall therefore conclude this essay with some traditions of man and nature, which a certain poet sang to me; and which, as they have always been in the world, and perhaps reappear to every bard, may be both history and prophecy. (Emerson 45)

At first, Emerson's announced intention of offering "tradition" to the reader seems to be a blatant contradiction to his project of providing an alternative to history, since tradition, as something that is, by definition, continuously and iteratively reported from the past, is inevitably but one further version of history actualized in the present; it is often defined as a "remembrance, or recollection existing as by transmission" which is "handed down from generation to generation" ("Tradition"). The impression of a rather obvious contradiction operating at this point is further enhanced when one takes into account that just as "history," "tradition" is mentioned in the introductory section of Nature as a feature that should be overcome (Emerson 7). In that regard, quoting "tradition" seems to be methodically at odds with the goal of dismantling the notion of a need for tradition. Here, however, Emerson references the aforementioned idealist notion chiefly influenced by Plato that all of material phenomena are but extensions of eternal ideas.

In his discussion of Emerson's reception of Plato, Ray Benoit admonishes his readers not to postulate either of the philosophers' conception of the relation between spirit and matter as one-directional; as Benoit points out, "the polarity is between matter or materialism on the one hand and spirit or idealism on the other. Unifying them without sacrificing the properties of either is the romantic calculus" (491). This objective of Plato as well as of Emerson and other authors of the Romanticist period, as Benoit continues regarding the said opposite poles, conditions that "[w]e are faced with the dilemma that what makes each desirable is precisely what makes each inadequate by itself: their opposition to each other. Any synthesis of them is then distinctly mystical" (ibid.). Nonetheless, the more one-directional conception of idealism seems to inform the quoted passage. According to that conviction, Emerson interprets the concept of "tradition" as akin to that of the material phenomenon, which is a manifestation of an eternal idea, or to what Emerson often refers to as "truth." As Paul Lauter suggests in his analysis of Emerson's usage of his two core concepts, "[a]t his most complex he may so interweave and equate various senses of *truth* and *nature* that the reader must evolve a new world-view in order to deal with the implications suggested" (70, 71). It is this logic that allows him to juxtapose and

equate the concepts of "history" and "prophesy" in spite of the fact that their meanings ostensibly contradict each other, the former referring to a version of an ascertained fact that occurred in the past, and the latter referring to a supposition regarding an event in the future. Since both "history" and "tradition," in the idealist logic, are expressions of unchangeable, eternal ideas, both have a quality of the prophetic, as future facts and events will, too, express the same eternal ideas. Viewed in this light, the presentation of a "tradition" introduced by an "Orphic poet" might not seem as contradictory, any more.

Yet the problem that arises now is a certain vacuity of the initial project of *Nature*. The urgency of the introductory chapter's exhortations to contemplate the possibility of a worldview that is not mediated by "history" or "tradition" seems hollow in the face of an equation of "history" and "prophecy," as well as in the face of the assertion that "tradition" expresses unchangeable truth. To put differently, an immediate relation with the material and spiritual world is not likely to reveal any new insights into what Emerson calls "truth" and postulated to be divine, nor does it appear likely that a mediation of perception by "history" or "tradition" would dangerously distort the material and spiritual world in the mind of the individual.

Bearing the divergences in mind, one can nonetheless state that both Paine's and Emerson's provisions regarding the correct reception of and interaction with hegemonic texts imply the normative citizen's potential divergence from received political opinion. While processes of becoming that condition the outline of prescriptive traits in Paine and Emerson do operate on a very strong identification of the human being as idealized citizen with the environment and sociopolitical context into which he is implied, this process does not render him devoid of the potential to hold oppositional views. Herein also lies the major difference between the conceptions of the citizen active in Paine and Emerson on the one hand and those informing, for example, French revolutionary philosophers on the other. As Caroline Weber reports the position of the citizen according to Rousseau's provisions regarding the general will, "[h]aving given himself over entirely to the community, no citizen withholds a private store of individual resistance […] that could detract from the perfect universality of the general will" (2).

The Citizen as Body without Organs

In spite of the diverging overall assessment of the useful and correct dealing with cultural narratives and texts, it is important to keep in mind that, generally, both authors can be said to construct the direct experience of the natural sphere as some expression of the divine as the chief experience of the ideal individual and normative citizen. This direct implication of the individual into the natural sphere should thus be replicated in the social one. As usual, Paine calibrates his views on the implication of the individual into society by means of contrasting his ideas with what he identifies as the dogmatic prescriptions of the Christian religion. In contrast to received and hegemonic forms of religion, Paine designs his own version of religious duties in the following passage, which also outlines his conception of the behaviors and modes of interactions of the normative citizen implicated into society. Striving to resemble the godhead is a chief feature of this outline of the normative citizen:

> Religion, therefore, being the belief of a God, and the practice of moral truth, cannot have connection with mystery. The belief of a God, so far from having any thing of mystery in it, is of all beliefs the most easy, because it arises to us, as is before observed, out of necessity. And the practice of moral truth, or, in other words, a practical imitation of the moral goodness of God, is no other than our acting towards each other, as he acts benignly towards all. We cannot *serve* God in the manner we serve those who cannot do without such service; and, therefore, the only idea we can have of serving God, is that of contributing to the happiness of the living creation that God has made. This cannot be done by retiring ourselves from the society of the world, and spending a recluse life in selfish devotion. (Paine, *The Age* 712)

This passage lays out Paine's notion of the individual and the individual role in an ideal society. As mentioned before, the "imitation" of the deity plays an important role in assessing Paine's view of the ideal, normative citizen. The "moral truth" represented by the deity is to be converted into practice by the individual, which according to Paine stipulates clearly that the individual must indeed be an active member of a "society of worlds" (*The Age* 710) and not live in withdrawal from the community of others. In other words, Paine's ideal individual is implicated into a social network, and finds pleasure in this very implication. Paine explains the necessity of this implication through his expositions regarding the concept of service. Service as subjection to God's provisions is one of the most heavily used tropes

for human existence in Christian discourse (e.g. Gilkey 234) and is critically re-evaluated by Paine in this passage. Paine states that the conventional idea of service cannot be applied to the practice of serving a godhead as proposed by the Deists. He makes clear that following a Deist conception of deity, "[w]e cannot *serve* God in the manner we serve those who cannot do without such service," implicitly referencing once again his neologistic notion of "manism" (*The Age* 690). The emphasis of the verb "to serve," rendered by both, its repetition as well as by its italicization in the original, draws attention to the denotative meaning of the word and thereby prepares for the contrast that Paine is about to establish in explaining that this term can have only a metaphorical meaning when associated with the Deist godhead. The denotative meaning finds itself clearly located in the context of human relations, as the phrase of "those who cannot do without such service" alludes to human individuals. In contradistinction to this notion of service, Paine establishes the service rendered to the godhead in much more diffuse terms. Service becomes in a way quasi synonymous with learning through observation. This grows apparent regarding the fact that Paine equates a certain kind of "imitation" and the doing of good deeds within society as the veritable kind of service to the Deist godhead.

Divine omnipotence, which both Paine and traditional Christianity award the deity, is at odds with the condition of not being able to "do without" anything. Therefore, the phrase employed can be read as pertaining to humans and to the human-made institutions and structures of authority prevalent in the religion criticized by Paine. In other words, those who insist upon the concept of serving God and define this kind of service in denotative terms humanize the deity. This humanization implies a vital necessity of service and functions as a device to transfer authority from the deity onto the human being and to merge the image of the all-powerful divine with the human, thus establishing the condition for what Paine labels "manism" and which functions as the binary opposite to "Deism." It is this construction of a religious system, reliant upon human authority to interfere or mediate between the believer and the deity that insists upon the importance of service in the meaning of and obeying an authority.

The most eminent passage in Emerson's entire dissertation describes the very process of a transformation leading to the reduction of the body to the organ representing the gaze and the virtual dissolution of the rest of the individual's bodily presence:

> Standing on the bare ground, – my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, – all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God. The name of the nearest friend sounds then foreign and accidental: to be brothers, to be acquaintances, – master or servant, is then a trifle and a disturbance. I am the lover of uncontained and immortal beauty. (Emerson 10)

Conceiving of the "lines of flight" as "trajectories of becoming" (West-Pavlov 202), I argue that the described reduction of the self to the function of the gaze, or the line of flight of the gaze, determines the relationship between the individual and nature. Developing David LaRocca's formulation that the metaphor of "the transparent eyeball and the possibilities of conceiving human corporeality and selfhood in ocular terms" serve to deliver an understanding of "how seeing and being are interpenetrating phenomena" (339) further, I contend that the said "interpenetration" of "seeing and being" induces processes of becoming in the observed and in the observer. Hence, it is necessary to add to LaRocca's assertion of the greater importance of the activity of visual perception than of the object thereof (340) that an interest in the circumstance of becoming is deemed important and worthy of expression in *Nature*, as well. The poet's ability to enter these processes is what marks him as an ideal individual. To render the matter in the terms of Deleuze and Guattari, what constitutes the poet as an ideal individual in *Nature* is his choice and ability to participate in the process of forming a rhizome with his environs, using the gaze. The formation of a rhizome as carried out by the "transparent eye-ball" does not only include connection and communication, shown to be characteristic for the rhizomatic space in the previous section; in addition, the formation of the rhizome is comprised by a process of various stages of becoming (*A Thousand Plateaus* 10), two of which are to be specifically inferred from the narrator's portrayal of the individual's interaction with nature. The first of these stages is defined by the process of acquisition of the "Body without Organs," the second by becoming that with which one forms the rhizome.

Although the "transparent eyeball" is not fully congruent with Deleuze and Guattari's outline of the "Body without Organs," both terms show a considerable degree of conceptual overlapping. Applying a rather rigid reading of the "Body without Organs" as essentially unachievable (*A Thousand Plateaus* 174), Derek Owens declares that

> Deleuze and Guattari's […] idea of the body without organs is not to be confused with the fantasy of the transcendentalist's transparent eyeball passing through the environs, but "is a limit" […] and thus a horizon point toward which our tribes of selves continually slide and yearn. (Owens 9)

While Deleuze and Guattari do emphatically and redundantly set forth that "[y]ou never reach the Body without Organs, you can't reach it, you are forever attaining it, it is a limit" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 174), they also define it as "a practice" and "an inevitable exercise or experimentation, already accomplished the moment you undertake it" (ibid.). It grows apparent that rather than exclusively a boundary whose crossing is impossible, the "Body without Organs" is defined as the very process of constituting itself. In order to start the process, the authors aver, one must "find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, [and] experience them" (ibid. 187). To "deterritorialize," or to "disperse" the organization of a specific "territory" (Colucciello Barber 198) and bring forth the disbanding of "contingent couplings" (West-Pavlov 183) is made possible by the gaze in *Nature*; the privileging of visual perception allows the narrator to re-evaluate the very "contingent coupling" of the human body, to dispute its unified "territory," and to suggest a re-grouping of its components and their prioritizations that better serves his intended interaction with the environment. In this manner, the "transparent eye-ball," as stated, represents the function of sight elevated to the defining element of the understanding of the corporal. The "movement of deterriorialization" or "line of flight" to be preferred by the ideal individual is thus implied to be the gaze, as it is the function of the gaze that allows the individual to experience a reorganization of the "forms, functions, bonds, dominant and hierarchized organizations" that Deleuze and Guattari regard to be enforced by the principle and practice of the unified organism (*A Thousand Plateaus* 184).

Becoming a "Body without Organs" using the line of flight of the gaze causes the narrator in the shape of the "transparent eye-ball" to define himself through the possible intensities of visual perception. Instead of feeling bound by either his organism or his position in an established field of social interaction, he focuses on the experience of intensity that the function of the gaze renders accessible to him. The narrator's identifications as "part or particle of God" as well as "the lover of uncontained and immortal beauty" illustrate

the intensity achieved through the conceptual detachment from a coherent bodily organization and the forceful concentration on the function of the gaze and its possibilities. Especially the aspect of "ecstasy" and "exhilaration" has often been interpreted as at the core of what Buell terms the "hyperbolic effusion" of the metaphor of the "transparent eye-ball" (*Emerson* 92-94). The essence of these sensations of intensity related to the gaze is termed by Christopher Newfield as a "moment of rapture" and interpreted as a compelling demand for "an identity that derives from the violation of personal boundaries rather than from their maintenance" (118). Although tracing vestiges of homoeroticism in *Nature* is Newfield's main interest, his description of the bodily conception as suggested by the said metaphor is helpful in understanding the effect of the intensity, ecstasy, and exhilaration on which the representation of the gaze rests: A normative, prescribed bodily structure and sense of integrity are conceptually abandoned when the intensity of the gaze starts to be felt by the individual. Intensity is a central factor when it comes to comprehending the "Body without Organs." As Deleuze and Guattari explain, "[e]very BwO is made up of plateaus. Every BwO is itself a plateau in communication with other plateaus on the plane of consistency," that is to say along the same line of flight (*A Thousand Plateaus* 183). Contextualizing the concept of the "plateau" in more detail, the authors define it to signify

> continuous regions of intensity constituted in such a way that they do not allow themselves to be interrupted by any external termination, any more than they allow themselves to build toward a climax […] (*A Thousand Plateaus* 183)

To paraphrase, the plateau represents a state of permanent intensity not inclining toward either intermission or relief of that intensity. On account of the fact that the identification of the "transparent eye-ball" forms through the intense modes of visual experience described, the narrator's metaphor for himself can be understood as such a plateau of intensity, connected to other plateaus via the line of flight of the gaze.

The becoming induced by the gaze transforms the narrator's evaluation of his social continuum. In the context of a contestation of unified territories and "contingent couplings," the process of becoming along the line of flight of the gaze induces the individual to regard family ties as well as social bonds and hierarchies as arbitrary and irrelevant to his state of being. His localization in a social territory between such dichotomous points of orientation

as “master and servant” is now perceived as “a trifle and a disturbance,” pointing to both the depreciation and the disruption the narrator feels at the memory of his previous, territorialized state. It is particularly interesting that the designations for family relations and relations of friendly social association, “to be brothers, to be acquaintances,” are positioned in contiguity with the designations of relations of bondage, namely “master or servant,” the latter of which are syntactically highlighted by means of a dash. By means of this contiguity, social and familial relations in general assume the connotation of repression characteristic of the relations of bondage in their textual vicinity. Examining the passage in question, Russ Castronovo concludes that “[t]rancendence […] severs the citizen from all the things – history, place, community, desire – that make him or her a citizen,” that “[c]oncern for a vital political community vanishes in an ethereal atmosphere,” and that the narrator “does not sing the praises of the political citizen; instead, he prefers the apolitical being” (150). With this reading, Castronovo typifies interpretations of *Nature* that term it, as Richardson summarizes without, however, agreeing, “a gospel of selfishness” (233). Emerson’s work in general, as Jack Turner points out, “is not known as a voice of civic responsibility” (125), while Emerson’s regard as “first and foremost a theorist of radical individualism” (Frank 384) does not necessarily imply the imperative of a politically aware individual attitude.

Arguing with the help of Deleuze and Guattari that drives and desires, whose implications can lead to a contestation of the normative structures of the bodily and the social, must be viewed as “political options for problems” (*A Thousand Plateaus* 12), I contend that the narrator, who leaves “the material realm so fully that he becomes vision itself” (Mariotti 311), chooses one such “political option” in re-arranging his bodily conception according to the drive of the gaze. This “political option” that becomes available along the line of flight of the gaze is the claim of a panoptic impact on the surroundings. However, the “transparent eye-ball” is more than what Karen Jacobs calls a representative of “the abstracted, monocular gaze of science, one equally committed to disembodiment through its aspiration to neutral detachment and objectivity” (146), and thereby an exemplification of the hegemonic gaze of incorporation. The acquired transparency of the “eye-ball,” that is to say of the individual who is capable of using sight as one of the “political options for problems” as put forth by Deleuze and Guattari, points to a transformation of that panoptic power otherwise exercised by hegemonic forces. As already stated, Foucault notes that the individual aware of being observed “inscribes in himself the power relation in

which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection" (202, 203), stating further that "[b]y this very fact, the external power may throw off its physical weight; it tends to the non-corporal" (203). The disembodied character of the "external power" is represented in the metaphor of the "transparent eye-ball." The invisibility of the agent of surveillance, by which, as expounded in this thesis' first section, power is constituted, finds its expression in the statement "I am nothing." Combined with the eyeball's transparency, the statement fortifies the impression of the surveilling entity's evasiveness to the scrutiny of the observed and thus seems to deliver a condensed depiction of the Foucauldian idea of panoptic surveillance when related to the following parallelism in the statement of "I see all." The individual in his form of the "transparent eye-ball" becomes a center of panoptic control, assuming this position's implied power to impose imperatives on the observed and to subject his surroundings to his demand for control. At the same time, the quality of transparency, while expressing evasiveness, entails the connotation of visibility, or to formulate more precisely, of not obstructing the gaze. This means that while capable of subjecting his environs to his gaze and scrutiny, the "transparent" individual himself allows his scrutiny in return. Exemplifying the reciprocating character of the gaze's construction in *Nature* as outlined in the last section, the "transparent eye-ball" implies political action that both, demands and exhibits accountability through transparence. By establishing these connections of reciprocating control through the gaze, the narrator does not outline a system in which the he, or the poet, is dissociated from his environs or the context that bestows upon him the status of political citizenship, as Castronovo suggests, nor does he defy "civic responsibility." The narrator much rather proposes a particular practice, namely the practice of the gaze, to implicate himself and his environs in interactions in a transformed way. The "problem" that this "option" of becoming a "Body without Organs" along the deterritorialization of the gaze seems to solve is the perceived lack of transparency and possibilities of control that characterized the political reality of the historical context of *Nature's* production.

The gaze plays an important role in the ideal individual's second process of becoming, namely becoming nature. While the description of rhizomatic nature in its form of the sky at night presented in the first chapter of the dissertation and analyzed in the previous section constructed the said sphere chiefly as an ideal to be followed and also conceded the implication of the individual into that sphere, but did not depict the consequences for the

individual in their entirety. The metaphor of the "transparent eye-ball" makes clear that the rhizomatic relation between the individual and Nature is not one of imitation. Deleuze and Guattari emphasize these processes of becoming over those of imitation:

> Mimicry is a very bad concept, since it relies on binary logic to describe phenomena of an entirely different nature. The crocodile does not reproduce a tree trunk, any more than the chameleon reproduces the colors of its surroundings. The Pink Panther imitates nothing, it reproduces nothing, it paints the world its color, pink on pink; this is its becoming world, carried out in such a way that it becomes imperceptible itself, asignifying, makes its rupture, its own line of flight […] (*A Thousand Plateaus* 10)

Becoming imperceptible in the process of "becoming world" is expressed in Nature, as well, when the narrator claims "I am nothing." What has been interpreted as an exemplification of the evasiveness of panoptic power to the interrogation of the observed above must also be seen as a mode of becoming and materializing that with which one forms a rhizome. Since nature is constructed to function according to panoptic principles, invisibility is not solely the inevitable marker of any becoming in *Nature*, as it is hypothesized by Deleuze and Guattari; much rather, invisibility also represents part of the logic inherent to a construction of nature that is both rhizomatic and panoptic. To put it differently yet, invisibility and nothingness are both, an expression of the change of an individual entity's properties as a result of the rhizome's formation, and the Pink Panther's pink, or nature's property actualized in becoming nature. When scholars of ecocriticism ascribe, in spite of a still strong "anthropocentrism," a certain degree of "moving away from egocentrism toward ecocentrism" to be present in the notion of the "transparent eye-ball" (Scheese 22), they invoke the very process of becoming nature that is facilitating by using the gaze as the mentioned method of becoming by rhizomatically connecting with their environs.

Interestingly, the narrator presents the quality of the poet to take possession and enter into a particular kind of communication with nature as intrinsic to every individual. To reiterate, when the narrator speaks of the farmers and landowners, he points out that "the property in the horizon," that is to say the possessions graspable through the gaze and thus owned effectively only by the poet, constitute "the best part of these men's farms." Rather

than a matter of inherent faculty, the participation in the process of communication with the natural environment is presented as a matter of choice, to which the use of "the language of property" (Dolan, "Property in Being" 359) in the chapter on beauty, not solely indicative of a "liberal inflection" (ibid.), also gives expression:

> Every rational creature has all nature for his dowry and estate. It is his, if he will. He may divest himself of it; he may creep into a corner, and abdicate his kingdom, as most men do, but he is entitled to the world by his constitution. In proportion to the energy of his thought and will, he takes up the world into himself. (Emerson 16)

As said, the narrator grants each individual the capacity to begin and maintain a relation of communications by way of possession with nature, defining it as "dowry and estate" to be claimed. Intensifying this statement, the individual is qualified as "entitled" to a possession of nature, which is now both generalized and expanded to be signified as "world." At the same time, a conspicuous specification and reduction takes place when the decision not to claim a relation with nature is metaphorically likened to the renunciation of a "kingdom," implicitly defining the individual as king. Understood, in this instance, as a political order, characterized by the central power of a sovereign, the concept of the kingdom is transformed by the implied multiplication of rulers whose entitlement is presented as simultaneously valid. To represent nature as a kingdom to which provides room for a great many of kings once again constructs nature as a sphere of non-centered multiplicity providing each component with power; yet in order to make use of that power, an active claim must be made. The claim expresses itself in the deliberate exercise of the gaze, of which the narrator only thinks the poet capable.

To further investigate the representations of processes of becoming in Nature, it is convenient to revisit Emerson's depiction of science as the opposite of a logic that the ideal, "poetic" human being should strive for. This depiction of science also enlarges the conceptual facets of the normative perception dealt with above: Not only does it now involve the perception of multiplicity and entirety, but it also fosters profound sensations of identification with the environment. In outlining the reasons for the inadequacy of science when it comes to providing the individual with an intellectual and also a spiritual basis for existence and self-definition, Emerson implicitly details his conception of a normative

individual perception of the world that forms a pathway to different forms of identification and becoming. He states:

> Nor has science sufficient humanity, so long as the naturalist overlooks that wonderful congruity which subsists between man and the world; of which he is lord, not because he is the most subtle inhabitant, but because he is its head and heart, and finds something of himself in every great and small thing, in every mountain stratum, in every new law of color, fact of astronomy, or atmospheric influence which observation or analysis lay open. (Emerson 44)

The enumeration of the spheres of identification amounts to an enumeration of the potential shortcomings of the scientist or "naturalist" and are likewise a ground to establish the virtues of the poet as that kind of individual who is better adapted to the reception and understanding of his relation with the environment and his position in the world. This special relation or position is marked by a "congruity which subsists between man and the world." The reference to "congruity" can be read as an affirmation of the identification with the individual objects entailed in the world as well as with these objects' entirety. This identification finds its apt circumlocution in the phenomenon of becoming, so central to the conception of the relations between the constituents of a system marked by oscillating vectors of vision and the subsequent mechanisms that these oscillating vectors of vision engender. When Emerson goes on to explain that every part and phenomenon of the natural world the poetic individual will also find in himself and vice versa, he offers more than a simplistic universalism, unto which his name is so strongly tied in reception and criticism.

By locating the condition for the constitution of a democratic society in the faculty of the gaze and concomitantly in the sense of pleasure upon exercising it, Paine and Emerson further establish the concept of power informing the relations within that system as immanent and immediate to the experience of the human body as multiplicity. This immanence of the condition and the quality of power corresponds with the construction of an immanent deity employed by both authors. Rather than focusing on a source of power or legitimization that is transcendent, such as a transcendent godhead or a transcendent historical ideal (cf. Vorländer 29, 30), Paine and Emerson achieve a construction in which both power and its legitimization can be contained and made to originate within the body of

every citizen, without the necessity of an external ideal. The fact that the authors themselves construct an ideal that is external to their readers' experience can by this token be read as a paratextual instance of irony which complicates their implicit projects. The circumstance that their construction of an idealized, normative sociopolitical structure is indeed an implicit one, presenting itself as a refutation of Christianity in Paine's case and as a philosophical dissertation in Emerson's, rather than as an ideal construction, might be interpreted as a method to obviate the said ironic contradiction in this context by appropriating the said genres for other than their explicit or conventionally recognized purposes.

The Citizen as Sighted White Male

As the categories of gender and bodily ability have played a considerable part in every of the passages quoted above, it is convenient to attend to these categories more exclusively as well as in more detail in their importance for the construction of the idealized, normative citizen in both Paine and Emerson. Discussions of different categories of identity in transcendentalist literature often focus on the philosophy of Universalism. It would not seem out of place to propose a reading of this and other passages in Emerson's work, as well as in the Deist thought of Paine, that identifies a rather static Universalism, one that can be defined in the words of Charles Camic as "the orientation that disregards the boundaries that exist within the social world and applies the same standards to all, whether or not they share the traits of one's own social group" (52). A Universalism defined in such a manner exceeds the specifically religiously stream of Universalism that defines itself via its antagonism to Calvinism in its postulation of the eventual general, universal salvation of all mankind (Packer 51, 52) – a stream with which Emerson was well connected by virtue of making the acquaintance of and keeping company with prominent Universalists such as Orestes Brownson or Abner Kneeland (ibid. 74, 75; also cf. Burkholder). Emerson's rather more political Universalism articulated itself in the "belief in the ultimate unity and equality of humanity" as well as in "the oneness of the human family," which conditioned his conviction in "the liberal democratic concept of universal human rights" (Gougeon 188).

I state that the "congruity" (Emerson 44) mentioned above and located at the heart of Emerson's philosophy, informing much of the tract in question, is much more dynamic. I

detect this dynamism in Emerson's description of the realization of this "congruence." Emerson writes that the attentive, poetic individual "finds something of himself in every great and small thing" (ibid.). The simple present third person singular of "finds" suggests an active process of realization preceded by a search for understanding, or at least by a search for a change in perception. The individual, to put differently, is not required to accept a Universalist claim regarding the natural realm; in this instance, Emerson does not claim that the world is, ontologically, ruled by the principle of "congruity" between all of its constituents. Much rather, Emerson requires the individual to actively and consciously project himself onto the world and the world unto himself. The imperative calling for an active and conscious act of deliberately constructing the said "congruity" in one's perception are very common in *Nature*. They also draw attention to the fact that the claims to the actual ontological structure of the world and the individual relation towards it are foregone in favor of a claim and imperative to a specific kind of thinking about the world. The processes of cognition regarding this "congruence" are, in other words, of greater importance to Emerson, as he does not deem them to remain without consequences. The result of such a projection of the self onto the world and the world unto the self is, clearly, a worldview that can very aptly be termed Universalist. I consider a greater degree of differentiation helpful when it comes to dealing with this particular characteristic of the philosophy and worldview that form the backdrop to so much of Emerson's thought. To this increasing degree of differentiation I would like to contribute by discussing the functions of this said projected and conscious universalism within the logic of *Nature*'s conception of the individual.

Interestingly, Emerson's political Universalism is often evaluated as having enabled him to critically address and condemn injustice, especially pertaining to slavery and during the Civil War. As for example Daniel S. Malachuk notes, it was "Emerson's keen desire to move past a partisan terminology to universal truth – and in this case, to the universal truth of transcendental equality" that provided him with the language to "urge[s] the nation, North and South, to recognize transcendental equality" ("Emerson's Politics" 274). In a similar way, Gougeon states that "[s]lavery was expecially abominable in Emerson's eyes because it violated an essential principle of what might be called democratic morality, a morality based on our common human nature" (189). Shannon L. Mariotti presents a somewhat more critical perspective, conceding that Emerson's Idealist and Universalist

formulations in that political context can serve "to inspire and to reassure" (330), but that "he also once again invokes a hierarchical dualism that devalues material particularity, thus making it difficult for him to marshal the power of that same material realm" when it comes to instigating political transformative action (ibid.).

This apparent consensus regarding the contradictory character of Emerson's Universalism is a very useful and important point of departure in further differentiating his conception of the normative citizen: The Universalist streak in Emerson, first and foremost, functions as a discursive means of obliterating the particularities and difficulties as well as the impossibility of adequate representation in the context of the complexity of American Antebellum society. Against the backdrop of the debates surrounding representation referenced by Woloch in the context of the French Revolution and its transition to a notion of popular sovereignty, one can note that Universalism potentially enables those in power to present their particular views and interests as legitimate and applicable to the whole, thus upholding their own place in power, perpetuating the status quo that enables this powerful position, and de-legitimizing resistance. Evidently, many aspects of such criticism are relevant to the present analysis. As one of America's most eminent "public intellectuals," Emerson was surely a representative of the powerful rather than the powerless class (Burkholder 7), even though his family history as well as his financial and political position would not permit locating him on the side of hegemony unequivocally. The hegemonic aspects of Emerson's Universalism, however, do not exhaust the expressive functions of Universalist discourse in *Nature*. Tying the issue of Universalism back to an outline of rhizomatic panopticism helps to detect and foreground other uses that this philosophy can develop when it comes to sketching the model citizen, his mindset, and behaviors.

The way his male identification informs the shape of his Universalism is clearest in his use of the male personal pronoun throughout his dissertation. This allows, as mentioned before, to arrive at the conclusion that Emerson's normative construction of a political system relies on, primarily, a male citizen to operate according to its provisions. In that regard, the contention that Emerson's Universalism is crucially informed by his masculinity, and therefore hegemonic affiliation, which prompts him to disregard the particular socio-political contexts of women, is vital to the present analysis. Similarly, Emerson's conception of the citizen relies on the concept of the able body, capable of exercising vision. Again, the

very particular experience of the subject speaking receives inflation to the proportion of universal truth and socio-political imperative.

As Caroline Weber points out, the valorization of the male over the female can also be stated to operate in the tracts of Rousseau, which can be found to be "narrating the triumph of virile communitarianism over womanly particularity" thus associating the category of the male with an ideal form of sociopolitical structures (4). Emerson constructs the category of the female as secondary to that of the male and vests it with a derivative rather than a primary quality:

> `Man is the dwarf of himself. Once he was permeated and dissolved by spirit. He filled nature with his overflowing currents. Out from him sprang the sun and moon; from man, the sun; from woman, the moon. The laws of his mind, the periods of his actions externized themselves into day and night, into the year and the seasons. But, having made for himself this huge shell, his waters retired; he no longer fills the veins and veinlets; he is shrunk to a drop. He sees, that the structure still fits him, but fits him colossally. Say, rather, once it fitted him, now it corresponds to him from far and on high. He adores timidly his own work. Now is man the follower of the sun, and woman the follower of the moon. Yet sometimes he starts in his slumber, and wonders at himself and his house, and muses strangely at the resemblance betwixt him and it. He perceives that if his law is still paramount, if still he have elemental power, if his word is sterling yet in nature, it is not conscious power, it is not inferior but superior to his will. It is Instinct.' Thus my Orphic poet sang. (Emerson 46)

In this particular quote, Emerson identifies the individual as the source of that which enables the political system according to the principles of an ideal democracy as laid out in the tract. The precondition for this political system to exist is light as the element that gives rise to the action of sight. Emerson thus postulates that man gave rise to the sun. Interestingly, it is "woman" whom he identifies as the origin of the moon. While this metaphor might be seen as a perpetuation of ancient and, one might say rather worn metaphors that postulate a key affinity or relatedness between the female element of the traditional dichotomy of genders as comparable to the moon, while the male end of that pole is linked in a mythological manner to the sun, one also has to keep in mind the logic of the gaze that Emerson

constructed in rather consistent terms throughout his tract. According to this logic, it is man who gives rise to the principle of sight by providing light, while woman gives rise to the principle of reflection by engendering the moon.

Tying this argument back to a more political terminology, Emerson seems to postulate that the power does indeed proceed from the citizen, namely from the individual and from his very particular capacities, which then receive a generalization and are again recognizable as a principle that not only governs the individual's body, but that can structure a society. This citizen is decidedly male. The female does not engender the principle of light that makes the system as such possible through the facilitation of the gaze and is, thus, not conceptualized as the source of political sovereignty. Much rather, the female is seen here as a secondary element which is enabled to function as the source of political sovereignty and power only by virtue of her affiliation with a male element, the primary source of political sovereignty. This view of the representation of men and women in the system of democracy designed appears to be strongly informed by antebellum structures of political dependence of females on males. While the female is granted to function in the same manner as the male, it is the male who is set as the predecessor and primary generator of the system. The democratic system put forward by Emerson thus seems to grant women to claim political sovereignty, but only in a second step, after the conceptual source of political sovereignty and power has been identified as male. To reflect, but not to give off light independently, thus seems like a metaphor that strongly reiterates notions of female dependency in political and legal matters.

While it has been doubtful, so far, whether Emerson's Universalist persuasion allowed him to use the male singular personal pronoun "he" to designate the poet as well as the activities he partakes of while intending to include all individuals, male and female, these doubts can now be rather cast aside in favor of the stance that it is the male poet and by extension the male citizen on which Emerson focuses his attention and whom Emerson sets as a normative element in his design of an ideal society. The connotation of vision and masculinity implies that the act of vision is contingent upon a male rather than a female body. The act of vision being the prerequisite of participation in society as outlined by Emerson, this said connotation also implies that female bodies are not fit to function as citizen bodies. Hence, when Emerson writes that "the best read naturalist who lends an entire and devout attention to truth, will see that there remains much to learn of his relation

to the world" (Emerson 43), the singular personal pronoun "he" can be read as to refer to a truly male naturalist rather than to designate an allegedly inclusive and aesthetically economical way of expressing a reference to all human beings as invested with the potentials of approaching the constructed norm of the "best read naturalist" or indeed of the poet. Postulating the male body capable of exercising vision as an ideal, Emerson perpetuates discourses that that link political enfranchisement with able-bodied masculinity that were propagated ever since the beginning of the American Republic. One case in point is the abovementioned speech Matthew Lyon, in which he constructs, as analyzed previously, a dichotomy between aristocracy and democracy on the basis of the concept of lineage, thereby linking the democracy to a construction of masculine bodily vigor.

Emerson, too, emphasizes the relationship between bodily vigor and a particular kind of hegemonic masculinity when he remarks

> [h]ow does Nature deify us with a few and cheap elements! Give me health and a day, and I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous. The dawn is my Assyria; the sun-set and moon-rise my Paphos, and unimaginable realms of faerie; broad noon shall be my England of the senses and the understanding; the night shall be my Germany of mystic philosophy and of dreams. (15)

This passage clearly relates masculinity, via its characteristic of physical power and "health," to domination in a political and territorial sense. This relation is facilitated by the experience of nature, in which this position and faculty of dominance and conquest is actualized metaphorically. By thus strongly emphasizing "health" as an ideal and connecting it as conspicuously to virility and the category of masculinity, Emerson not only constructs a prescriptive model of citizenship as contingent on upon masculinity and being able-bodied, he also implicitly constructs its opposite. This opposite is not only female, as he makes explicit in a previously quoted passage, it is also not conforming to the presented arbitrary standard of "health." In this instance, Frida Beckman's explanation of the constructions of ableized identities in the context of Deleuze's philosophy is pertinent to the discussion. Reconstructing hegemonic conceptions of gender and ability, Beckman reports that "[j]ust as the body is divided up into two clearly distinct sexes, the identity associated with the disabled body risks becoming delimiting rather than enabling as a divergent set of traits tend

to be contrasted with an image of normative functionality" (100). This limiting experience is not only extended to those individuals ableized by the hegemonic construction of normativity, but does so to those who fall within the said norm, as well. While Beckman refers to explicit acts of "recognizing a disabled identity," I suggest that its implicit construction as undertaken by Emerson, too, "risks imprisoning the forces of all bodies by perpetuating the borders that have defined categories of normality and disability" (ibid.).

For Emerson, beauty in nature is a quality first and foremost apparent and accessible to the sense of sight, exuding its variegated beneficial effects upon the individual during and after visual perception. The first of the three listed merits that Emerson identifies natural beauty to have for the perceiving individual is mere "delight" (14). This "delight," however, is subsequently characterized as "needful" (ibid.). This needfulness Emerson identifies to lie in nature's provision of an alternative sphere to the habitual environs of the contemporary individual. When Emerson states that "[t]o the body and mind which have been cramped by noxious work or company, nature is medicinal and restores their tone" (14) the aspect of "delight" (ibid.) seems to be eclipsed by that of being "needful" (ibid.) when it comes to evaluating the role of nature's beauty for the individual, as contact with the natural sphere is rendered in Emerson's words a physical necessity. The adjective "medicinal" (Emerson 14) directly employed to qualify nature further intensifies this notion of physical, bodily necessity to expose oneself to nature, as it connotes the presence of a disease in the contrary case. The juxtaposition of nature and medicine adds urgency to the incorporation of an explicit concern for the human body and its state when regarding the relation between the human being and the natural sphere.

The introduction of the semantic field of medicine to these elaborations on nature's role in the life experience of the contemporary human being constructs two different, opposed spheres that follow specific kinds of discipline in the Foucauldian sense. Emerson states explicitly that it is the "noxious work of company" that effectuates the need in the human being to experience the "medicinal" effect of nature (14). To simplify the implication in this passage, one can say that Emerson constructs the sphere of work, characterized by the discipline of the workplace and connoted with disease, and the sphere of nature, characterized by the discipline of medicine and connoted with health. The following sentence further establishes the individual parameters of these two opposed spheres by describing the transformation that transition between them brings about in the individual.

Emerson writes, "[t]he tradesman, the attorney comes out of the din and craft of the street, and sees the sky and the woods, and is a man again" (14). Again, the emphatic reference to a regained sensation of virility can be read as an allusion the notion of regaining physical energy through the salubrious impact of nature, while the execution of an urban profession and the location within the space of the city seems to detract from this virile physical energy in Emerson's description. In that regard, nature invigorates the individual because it provides a space in which he can experience the powerful position of active domination, in contrast to the experience of dependence and subjection marking an insertion into the professional and urban sphere of life.

Several other excerpts point to the fact that industrialization strongly transmuted the conception of the human body in its political relation to the society inhabited. As indicated in a previous chapter, the 1830s and 1840s were deeply shaped by the processes of industrialization. Famously, transcendentalists seemed to oppose the implications of this trend, though not always unambiguously. Transcendentalism is thus understood to have provided an alternative to the increasing complexity of an industrializing and expanding society, suggesting bucolic and overall nostalgic imaginary spaces that recreated a pre-industrialized past in their attempt to negotiate the sociopolitical circumstances of the first half of the 19th century. Transcendentalists opposed the reduction of the human being to a part of the production process that has a very determined, mechanistic role to play (cf. D. E. Smith). In this context, Emerson's emphasis on the advantageousness of an idealist worldview whose conception of the human being is not exhausted by mechanistic and materialist notions can be read as an engagement of that current sociopolitical issue of industrialization. To put differently, the able, strong body that Lyon identifies as the precondition for democratic participation and which is implicitly informing Paine's view of the model citizen in the last decades of the 18th century, now transforms into an instrument of production by the time of Emerson's writing *Nature* in New England. Instead of an enabling factor, the body is now mostly a factor of the oppressive implication into processes of industrial production. Rather than political, the body's role now shifts to be mostly economic.

The physical act of vision retains its political importance in Emerson, but it is made to overlap discursively with realms of spirituality and religion. It is, more explicitly than in Paine, a first step that finally leads to an understanding of the world that transcends scientific

materialism and arrives at the divine cause of the existence and specific arrangements of matter. This state of direct understanding of the metaphysical processes that set matter into the world can be described with Emerson's words as one of "the extensions of a power which exists not in time or space, but an instantaneous in-streaming causing power" (Emerson 47).

Emerson clearly refers to the mechanistic perception of the human body as a mere extension of a device involved in production when he enumerates the elements that constitute the realm of a merely materialist "understanding" of the worlds. He writes that such an understanding is not much different from physical operations, and objects used for these operations, such as "manure; the economic use of fire, wind, water, and the mariner's needle; steam, coal, chemical agriculture; the repairs of the human body by the dentist and the surgeon" (Emerson 46). The impact of industrialization can likewise explain the negative connotation of the "scientist" and "naturalist" referred to above, which clearly distinguishes Emerson's line thought from that of Paine and his enthusiastic view of the natural scientist as the individual who exercises the right kind of vision and is thus enabled to function in an ideal democracy.

While the reference to Matthew Lyon has explicated the importance of the conception of the able, strong body to the design of democracy in the Early Republic, this present quote from Emerson seems to qualify the role of the able, strong body for his own design of a democratic political system. In Emerson's view, a body that only focuses on its physical existence and matters connected with it cannot exercise its full potential power. The citizen seems to be required to construct for himself, under the beneficial influence of nature, a "seeing machine," which will not only produce the physical pleasure alluded to by use of the bodily semantic field, but also the power needed to strengthen one's position of domination. In fine, it is the seeing machine that produces pleasure and power according to Emerson's model.

Paine presents a clear contrast to Emerson in his apparent lack of statements as ostensibly focusing on the difference of genders and the construction of a corresponding difference in sociopolitical functions. On the grounds of this absence, once can therefore easily interpret his aforementioned philosophical Universalism literally, that is to say not as primarily a projection of a male perspective set as the norm onto all individuals disregarding

their particularities, but as an attempt to assert equality discursively. Jack Fruchtman seems to agree with this evaluation when he states that

> [l]ike many writers of his era, he consistently used the term man to refer to people or human kind in general. In an eighteenth-century context, the term could easily refer only to persons of the male gender. Paine's usage, however, was almost always universal, including both women and men. […] His goal was to return all people, men and women alike, to their true selves. (xii)

Likewise, Walter Woll avers that Paine's use of the male personal pronoun was due to "[t]raditional custom" (265), while Paine tries to discursively encompass "both sexes" (ibid.) when it comes to the exposition of his vision of political change. Nonetheless, Woll expresses very clearly that Paine's progressive attitude toward the enfranchisement of women should not be overstated and that he "was not a male feminist" (274) in spite of some claims to the contrary, for his overtly political texts suggest the provision "of social security for both sexes and basic human rights, but certainly not of equal political rights" (ibid.). The same qualification Woll extends to the issue of race, as Paine "was not a champion of ethnic rights, either" on account of his very Universalist tendencies (274).

Woll's observation and Paine's Universalism notwithstanding, this difference to Emerson combined with the discursive practices during Paine's time of writing can lead to the conclusion that Paine does not construct gender difference as relevant in his design of prescriptive features characterizing the normative citizen in the specific context of *The Age of Reason*. To this thesis one can add that the only instances in which gender differences find explicit reference only in his deconstructions of Biblical narratives and his criticism of the characters that are involved in them. He uses the noun "woman" only at two occasions in the tract, at one point utilizing it in order to paraphrase Adam and Eve as "one man and one woman" (*The Age* 710) in order to ridicule the presumed gravity of their sin against the deity by way of showcasing their particularity, and at another referring to "the Virgin Mary" as "woman" when expressing doubt regarding the claim of the Immaculate Conception and implicitly referring to the common act of conception (ibid. 668). In contrast to Emerson, Paine uses the noun in a strictly denotational sense, not metaphorically as the explication of philosophical, theological, or political principles. He also only makes use of this direct

reference to gender distinctions when it is useful in his endeavor to deconstruct church doctrine, whose dogma is in many instances prefaced on the construction and fortification of specific gender differences.

In this regard, Paine seems to resonate much more strongly with Deleuze and Guattari than does Emerson with his metaphorical use of gender difference to construct sociopolitically coded differences perpetuating hegemonic provisions. As Tamsin Lorraine points out in her analysis of Deleuze and Guattari's postulations regarding gender in the context of the power structure of the family in its correspondence to society, "[f]lows implicated with race, religions, collectives of various forms, the history of one's group, and so forth, always, for them, come before the reduction of these different flows to the gendered flows of the family story" (50). Paine's insistence on structural multiplicity with the simultaneous lack of politically charged statements regarding gender can thus be regarded as a point of resonance with the social analysis of the French poststructuralists. Emerson, on the other hand, seems much more aligned with hegemonic structures, in which "[t]he active-passive dichotomies of sexual difference are replicated in other social binaries with one identification of two possibilities being always better or worse (i. e. either closer to or further from the majoritarian subject)" (ibid. 54).

To sum up one can say that in spite of the authors' emphasis on multiplicity and heterogeneity of both, presumed sociopolitical unities and physical bodies, a hegemonically converging organism that presents itself with the features of sightedness and masculinity is upheld. Emerson presents these features as informing his normative construction of the citizen rather more intensely than does Paine. Emerson also shows himself more tolerant of traditions, histories, and other hegemonic texts, again revealing himself as less consciously oppositional than Paine. This positioning is further reflected in Emerson's disparaging of scientific observation, which in his view runs the risk of deflecting attention from a harmonious unity and its achievement. In this manner, he diverges from Paine's greater focus on heterogeneity and multiplicity, postulated to structure primarily both, systems and bodies. Both authors, however, couple the act of visual perception to that of desire, thereby stabilizing participating and constructing its incentive as urgent to the individual. In "The Republican Philosophy of Emerson's Early Lectures," Malachuk identifies this political theory as postulating essentially "that humans are political beings who realize their full potential through the acts of civic virtue required to sustain a republic" (405) and that this postulation

impacted the construction of a political theory in Emerson's texts written in the 1830s. Both authors' allusions to the principle of desire and the perception of this desire in intense physical terms might be read as adding further emphasis to the necessity of citizens' involvement, which does not hinge on "civic virtue" or any implicit and internalized coercion any more, but is instead fomented by the citizen's own, nearly physical desire.

10. Conclusion

As the analysis shows, both Paine and Emerson utilize a discourse, vested chiefly in vocabularies pertaining to religion and spirituality, that emphasizes direct visual perception, a high degree of connectivity between a system's participating elements fostered by the gaze, and the reciprocity of visual relations. Visual relations also transmit information and allow the elements to impact each other, actualizing their responsiveness and accountability to each other. The structure thus engendered is characterized by multiplicity, heterogeneity, as well as by the instability and contingency of hierarchical structures and centers of power. On account of its structural properties and the semantic fields engaged, I propose to term this discourse rhizomatic panopticism. The structural characteristics presupposed by this discourse are likewise the structural characteristics of democratic political systems. As both Paine and Emerson use the discourse of rhizomatic panopticism to describe the natural sphere, these natural descriptions can well be read as implying political systems structured according to democratic parameters.

These constructions acquire relevance in the face of the historical political contexts that gave rise to them, as every one of these contexts was marked by an intense and conscious negotiation of democratic parameters in endeavors to create new political systems, as in the case of the Early Republic and the French Revolution, or to significantly transform existing ones, as in the case of Jacksonian Democracy. These national historical contexts were characterized by contestations of issues pertaining to centralization, hierarchies, political representation, and unification, thereby engaging concepts addressed and encompassed by the discourse of rhizomatic panopticism. The anti-traditionalist and partly scientific vocabularies of Deism and Unitarianism as well as Transcendentalism further enhanced and specified the discourse of rhizomatic panopticism, superficially depoliticizing it in sociopolitical circumstances in which overt political alternatives could not be easily voiced.

As said, both authors postulate vision to be the most defining feature fostering connectivity in a system, primarily in the natural environment in the context of both tracts. One of the aspects of this connectivity through vision is the didactic character of the visual interactions in which the human being engages. Paine seems to employ a rather more conscious projection of a didactic purpose onto the natural sphere on account of its very visibility. Emerson, on the other hand, does not consciously mark his suppositions regarding the purpose of visibility as projections on already established structural characteristics and associations. By drawing attention to the process of ascribing a particular meaning to existing structures and characteristics marking a system, Paine is more mindful of the motivations that inform such conscious constructions than is Emerson. One of the structural features of the system that further condition the gaze is its multiplicity of constitutive elements, which causes the gaze to assume a multi-directional vector. This quality renders the gaze rhizomatic. Another attribute that contributes to the gaze's rhizomatic character is its reciprocity, which both authors imply to be its defining feature. The system's structural multiplicity and its connecting medium's reciprocity mark it as a place in which hierarchies can be easily undermined, although they can still remain present within the system.

In both Paine and Emerson the reciprocity of the gaze is implied to directly impact the behaviors of the system's constituent elements engaging in vision. In that manner, responsiveness and accountability calibrate themselves between the elements as they assume the imperatives communicated to them through the passageways created by vision. In that manner, the gaze actualizes its panoptic and disciplining quality. In this context, Emerson renders significantly more space to the description of the impact of a reciprocal gaze on the human being than does Paine. Emerson also emphasizes the pleasurable character of such an interaction determined by the reciprocal, oscillating gaze.

Another important difference between Paine's and Emerson's constructions of the gaze concerns its distribution among the participating elements of a system. Paine strongly criticizes the attempts undertaken by the church to legitimize claims to power on the basis of a presumed visual witnessing of events visually inaccessible to others. By implication, Paine seems to advocate an equal distribution of authority based on the equal accessibility of the gaze. Emerson diverges from that normative construction of equality by postulating that the correct application of the gaze is not generally executed by all constituent elements of the system, but restricted to a few. This rather more elitist approach toward the

execution of power through the execution of the gaze is likewise present in his conception of representative mechanisms.

The analysis of both authors' representations of linguistic representation, of intervening Biblical figures, as well as of histories reveals some important differences between Paine's and Emerson's conception of transparence and representation. Emerson is rather more favorably disposed toward representative mechanisms as transpires in his depiction of language and in the juxtaposition of language and nature. Postulating that both language and the material world ultimately operate on the same principle of symbolically representing and even explicating other phenomena, material and spiritual, Emerson casts the representative mechanism as a useful and partly inevitable tool, while his depiction of analogy in general stipulates the human capacity of thought to hinge fundamentally on the construction and recognition of analogous structures. When Paine speaks of language, in the strict sense, he does so mostly disparagingly. In contrast to Emerson, Paine states that undue attention to language distracts from the material referents it is supposed to represent, thereby detracting from the human being's capacity to devote the needed attention to the study of nature and science to gain a deeper understanding of the divine. While Paine, too, casts the natural sphere as a text when he states that it is "the word of God" (*The Age* 686), he seems to do so only to engage and appropriate vocabularies employed by the church and by the Bible in order to deconstruct their hegemonic meanings; he does not do so in order to cast the linguistic system of representation as commendable on its own terms.

The same distinction can be drawn between Paine and Emerson when it comes to the depiction of Jesus Christ and of other theological concepts that function as interfaces between the individual believer and the divine. Paine continues to depict this form of an interface in distinctly unfavorable terms that evoke images of obstruction, opacity, and obfuscation. Emerson, on the other hand, constructs a cascade of different interfaces all assuming shapes of increasing specificity; this variety of representations of the divine is once again postulated to be a necessary aid in conceiving of various aspects of the godhead. Likewise, the authors diverge considerably in their elaborations on the matter of histories as the representation of past events. Initially, some overlap might be detected between them, as Paine condemns the Biblical equation of a narrative history with revelation and as Emerson demands the overcoming of history and tradition as orientations and standards on which to base all aspects of modern life. Emerson, however, constructs a sphere into which

events of the past can be projected and in which they can be virtually stored. This “instant eternity” (39) Emerson presents to be universally accessible, thus positing it to overcome the problem of the inaccessibility of past events and the concomitant inherent lack of veritable transparence of historical accounts – a circumstance on which Paine’s criticism of the Bible is largely based. Conceptualized with the help of political vocabularies, Paine’s depictions of language, Jesus Christ, and historical accounts imply a political system as favorable in which the establishment of a relation between the source of power and the people proceeds as immediately as possible, thus giving rise to a popular sovereignty through a process of becoming in which that power is transcribed onto the people in contact with it. Emerson, by way of contrast, conceives of representative mechanisms as helpful to deal with different challenges of scale, introducing conspicuously modern, even pioneering notions of virtual spaces on the basis of his investment in philosophical Idealism in the process.

Both Paine and Emerson vest the rhizomatically panoptic gaze in the materialized form of movement, which becomes synonymous with connectivity as every position within society is thereby rendered accessible. Further, both authors are aware that material conditions are dependent upon the distribution of power in any one society. On this issue, however, Paine shows a keener interest in sensitizing his readers to the impact that established and insufficiently transparent institutions as well as the concomitant structures of privilege can exert when it comes to the distribution of wealth within a society. Paine dismantles the connection between such institutions and political structures that operate on the basis of representation, seemingly putting forward that representation, or any relation relying upon intervening elements shielding the vast majority of individuals from direct access to positions of power, is wont to produce resilient structures of privilege and one-directional flows of wealth. By way of contrast, Emerson uses vocabularies and Idealist concepts that render his position on this topic much more ambiguous. Asserting that one’s location within a hierarchy is contingent on “the faculties and affections of the mind” (48), Emerson is apparently permissive of both, a hegemonic interpretation and of one that merely states the importance of an awareness of power structures when it comes to dealing with sociopolitical hierarchies of whatever sort.

One characteristic that remains important for the more concrete, material considerations of an ideal society is that of multiplicity. Translated into the realm of a sociopolitical structure, multiplicity manifests itself as heterogeneity that marks the

population, the political positions and interests, etc. of any society. Paine implies that the observation of such heterogeneous groups' interactions and relations can promote a descriptive political science and a notion of "law" more akin to that used in natural science rather than to that prescriptive and coercive notion that more often finds application in politics. While Emerson is equally engaging in a translation of multiplicity in the natural world to heterogeneity in the social realm, tying this translation to the proliferation of social movements and activisms during his time of writing, he is less unambiguously optimistic about the effects of such heterogeneity. Rather than bringing about greater clarity and understanding regarding the mechanisms governing society, political contention in Emerson's view is accused of diminishing the very same. Again, it seems warranted to locate Emerson as invested in a rather more hegemonic evaluation of social structures and their prescriptive outlines.

The defining prescriptive feature of the normative citizen on which both Paine and Emerson center their implicit construction of the idealized political individual is the capacity to engage various aspects of the rhizomatically panoptic gaze and reevaluate one's own physical integrity in terms of this capacity. In this manner, the notion of multiplicity is once again activated, not only as a key structural characteristic of the devised system, but also as an aspect of the gaze employed by the normative citizen. This aspect allows such a citizen to perceive systems as arrangements determined by multiplicity and heterogeneity rather than as unified and solid, totalized wholes. In this way, the normative citizen is implied to distrust structures that appear as unities and instead pays attention to the variegated and multifarious character of a system's constituents. This focus on multiplicity and heterogeneity, however, is expressed more strongly in Paine's text than it is in Emerson's. Emerson's slightly more adamant stance on the beneficence of recognizing the unity which a multiplicity can foster leads him to adopt an unfavorable view of natural science. While Paine's normative citizen is also a scientific observer, Emerson belittles the exact sciences as unduly atomizing knowledge and, by extension, the environment about which this knowledge is to be gained. This divergence notwithstanding, both authors are potentially permissive of the idea of a harmonious unity that calibrates itself between heterogeneous multiplicities of a system.

As mentioned, this ability to focus on the heterogeneous multiplicity as well as on the whole system that it forms in its entirety, without however obliterating the particularities of

the constituent elements, is also the defining feature of the conception of the human body in both Paine and Emerson. This means that rather than conceiving of himself as a physically unified organism, the normative citizen is postulated to regard his body as an array of discreet multiplicities that manifest themselves in various desires. Out of these desires that of exercising vision as well as feeling oneself the object of another element's vision is an important constitutive factor for the normative relations constructed by Paine and Emerson. Concentrating on that desire of vision, the authors describe the normative citizen as having achieved the Body without Organs that operates on a plane of immanence determined by the positive desire of engaging in visual connections with others. This positive desire is fostered and intensified within a system whose connectivity is fashioned after the model of the rhizomatically panoptic gaze and therefore compels the citizen to participate within it. The participation of visible elements, themselves exercising vision, gives rise to oscillating vectors of the gaze, and thus specific relations and power structures develop. By this virtue, the human body becomes the source of power, albeit a body defined in the fashion of a heterogeneous assemblage not voluntarily accepting the hegemonic imperative to unify into one organism. Following this premise, both Paine and Emerson present famously disembodied subjects as speakers in their respective tracts. Paine only refers to unified bodies or organisms and their processes when he speaks, disapprovingly, of Biblical figures whilst criticizing the negative and anti-democratic impact that the narratives into which they are entwined exert upon society. Emerson, too, presents the body as the human being's entry into coercive and exploitative relations, while the concentration on visual perception and the organs therewith associated harbors the most rewarding experiences, spiritual and sociopolitical, in his view.

The location of the source of political power within the individual citizen also corresponds with a refusal to accept structures of privilege that derive their legitimization from a transcendent, as opposed to an immanent, source. Thus refusal conditions in the normative citizen a distrust of legal documents regulating power and privilege structures if those documents' origin and genesis cannot be transparently ascertained. In this manner, Paine constructs constitutions that derive their authority from their historical perseverance as not binding and subject to scrutiny and popular renegotiation. Emerson's Idealism, by way of contrasts, enables him to project a less condemning view on traditions and history,

thereby allowing, once again, for more lenience when it comes to the evaluation of currently manifest privilege that lacks a transparent justification.

Nonetheless, several textual instances, especially in Emerson, point to the perseverance of a hegemonic conception of the normative citizen's body, which appears most often as that of a sighted white male. In both Paine and Emerson, this perpetuation of hegemonic prescriptive features is mediated through their investment in a philosophical Universalism that predisposes them to cast aside particularities, belying the ideal of heterogeneity; likewise, Universalism predisposes both authors to project their own subject position onto the very multifarious and heterogeneous multiplicity that they extol. Emerson's association of the normative citizen with a hegemonic masculinity further manifests itself in specific descriptions of the category of the female as derivative and secondary. Paine, on the other hand, only distinguishes between specific males and females in his critical reference to Biblical characters.

This comparative analysis of Paine's *The Age of Reason* and Emerson's *Nature* makes clear that the reason for their differences in the construction and application of rhizomatic panopticism exceed a merely historical or historicizing explanation. In other words, I suggest that those differences are predicated on more than their different historical contexts of writing the respective texts. Rather than ascribe the said differences to the different historical contexts only, I propose that the differences are contingent upon the texts' differing positions to hegemonic structures. As I have made redundantly clear in the course of my analysis, Paine's tract is directed unambiguously against the church in its capacity as a representative of hegemonic power, while Emerson's tract does not position itself as clearly with regard to its evaluation of hegemonic institutions. I thus suggest that Paine's rhizomatic panopticism has, to borrow from Stuart Hall, a distinctly oppositional aspect, while Emerson's version of rhizomatic panopticism has a negotiating one, showing some overlap with hegemonic discourses in some instances, but also upsetting them in others. It is therefore important to keep in mind that rhizomatic panopticism is not an immutable construct presupposing a radical or direct democratic political structure always irreconcilably positioned against anti-democratic, elitist, or otherwise hegemonic power structures. Much rather, the term "rhizomatic panopticism" has proved itself useful to capture and describe a particular discourse that conceives all systems of various constituent elements in terms of

their multiplicity and heterogeneity, and that expresses connections between those elements, themselves regarded as multiplicities, in chiefly visual terms.

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